

1993

African-American high school students' perceptions toward agriculture and careers in agriculture

Sidney Leroy Brown
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agriculture and careers in agriculture**

Brown, Sidney Leroy, Ph.D.

Iowa State University, 1993

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**African-American high school students' perceptions toward
agriculture and careers in agriculture**

by

Sidney Leroy Brown

**A Dissertation Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Department: Agricultural Education and Studies
Major: Agricultural Education**

Approved:

Signature was redacted for privacy.

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For the Major Department

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**Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa**

1993

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INTRODUCTION

By the year 2000, the U.S. work force will be over 50% female and non-white because of a low birthrate of white males. If we do not educate and train enough skilled workers in these groups and bring them into the work force, the U.S. cannot be a competitive force among the industrial nations.

The policies generated by this emphasis on human capital will be based on equal opportunity, not equal outcome. Fighting poverty, educating the poor and culturally diverse work force are basically economic issues--the development of human capital and the management of human resources.

This will render racial, ethnic, and gender differences inconsequential. Empowerment will automatically be available to all who want to take advantage of affirmative opportunity to become skilled. Moreover, preference programs will automatically phase themselves out. The demand for skills will drive work force selections and determined outcomes. Therefore, equal outcome (T. Brown 1992, p. 12).

The projected need for the food and agricultural sciences by the year 2000 (Figure 1) reveals that the demand for agricultural graduates outweighs the supply by some 4,279 graduates. The following paper will address how African-Americans have faced issues concerning America and themselves, historically. This was done in an attempt to better understand how African-Americans may perceive agriculture (careers).

S. Brown (1992) indicated that at the end of the Civil War, rural American families were ravaged by war and unprepared for the growing industrial revolution. The pre-Civil War southern society had been based on an agrarian way of life, depending on the unskilled labor force. After the war

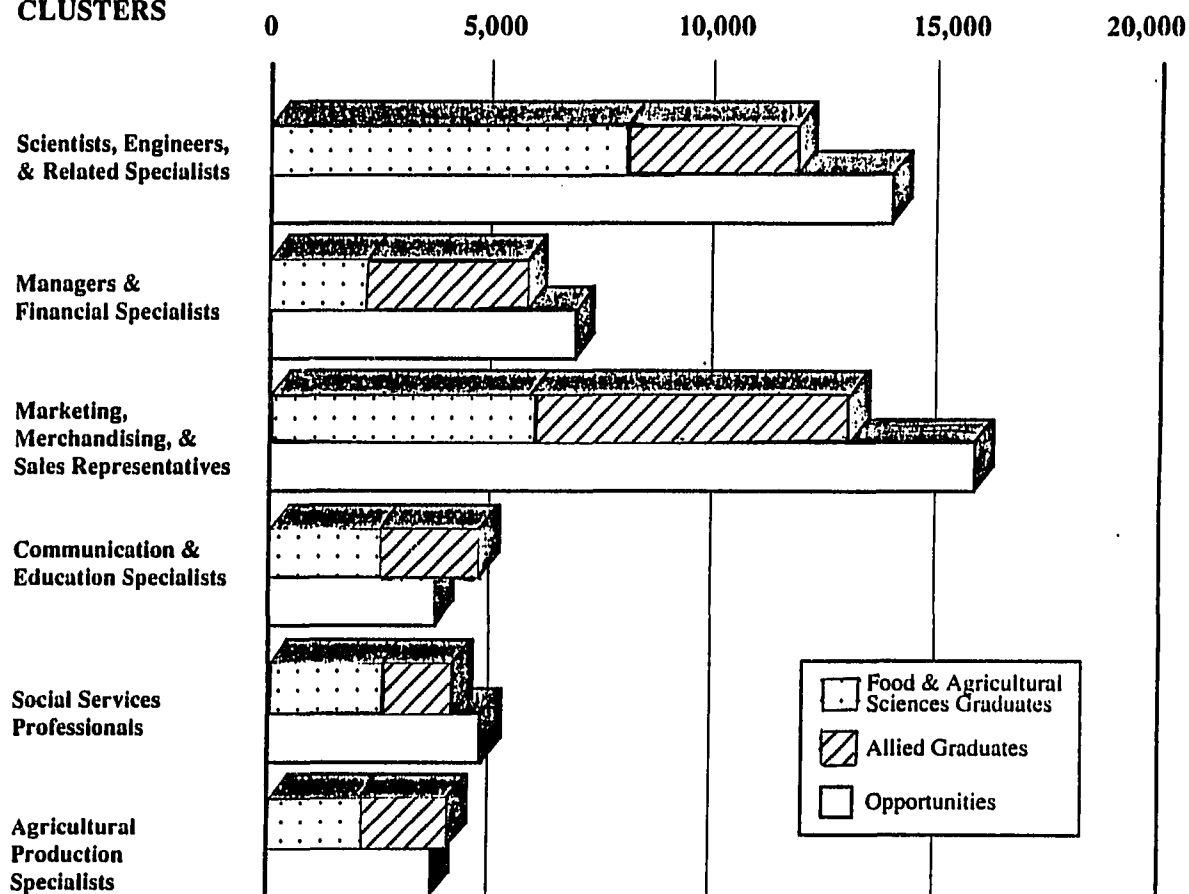
**EMPLOYMENT
CLUSTERS**

Figure 1. Employment opportunities for college graduates in food and agricultural sciences, (USDA, 1990, p. 9).

there was a need for a new expanded economic base; a new south. There was a large available labor force which needed to be trained. The success of this revolution in the new south depended on the development of the African-Americans. After the Civil War, African-Americans were illiterate, poor, malnourished, and unskilled. There was a need for training and leadership, and Booker T. Washington filled that need.

Washington extended the university's (Tuskegee University) knowledge to the people in a language they could understand. He improved their day-to-day lives. He knew technical training was important. He also knew that people were intimidated by change and the professionals who tried to initiate change. People in general often are afraid and reluctant to ask questions. They assumed professionals would "look down" on them.

Washington brought technical skills and self-worth to the people by enlisting help of community leaders: preachers, teachers, and philanthropists. The community leadership developed an infrastructure that provided a basis for practical leadership. Much of the leadership was provided by extension agents.

The extension agents encouraged the people to improve their skills in reading, writing, and hygiene. They encouraged land stewardship, ownership, the development of cooperatives, and credit unions. The latest farming practices, canning and preserving foods, quilt-making, nutrition, and children's games helped build character. Before Tuskegee Institute, in Tuskegee, Alabama, began its Extension program, more than 90% of the African-Americans lived in the rural South. They continued to live there until the early 1900s. As implied by Booker T. Washington's the three E's of

empowerment, entrepreneurship, and education were infused into the communities, the United States witnessed a great migration of confident African-American to jobs in the northern industrial cities.

Today, low-resource families confront problems similar to those of a hundred years ago. They are faced with a lack of skills and motivation. They need a hand--not a handout--and the reapplication of the three E's to meet the challenges of a new Revolution.

The U.S. Census Bureau (Higher Educ. Pro., USDA, 1990) has predicted that by the 21st century the American work force will depend on its nonwhite population. Is America prepared? Who will give leadership and direction?

Historically Black land grant colleges and universities, commonly referred to as "1890 Institutions" and located in the sixteen Southeastern states, were established under the Second Morrill Act of 1890 (Division of Home Eco. Alabama A & M, 1990). These so-called "1890 land grant" colleges expound upon the essence of Justin Smith Morrill's quest for a truer expression of the American education ideal: which was that all Americans have equal access to higher education. (Refer to Figure 2.)

The one area in which the "1890 land grant" colleges and universities and Tuskegee University have had a wealth of success is in the production of minority human capital. These universities have produced an overwhelming majority of minority students in spite of inadequate financial support, inadequate facilities, inadequate personnel, and other inadequate pertinent resources when compared to the "1862 land grant" colleges and universities.

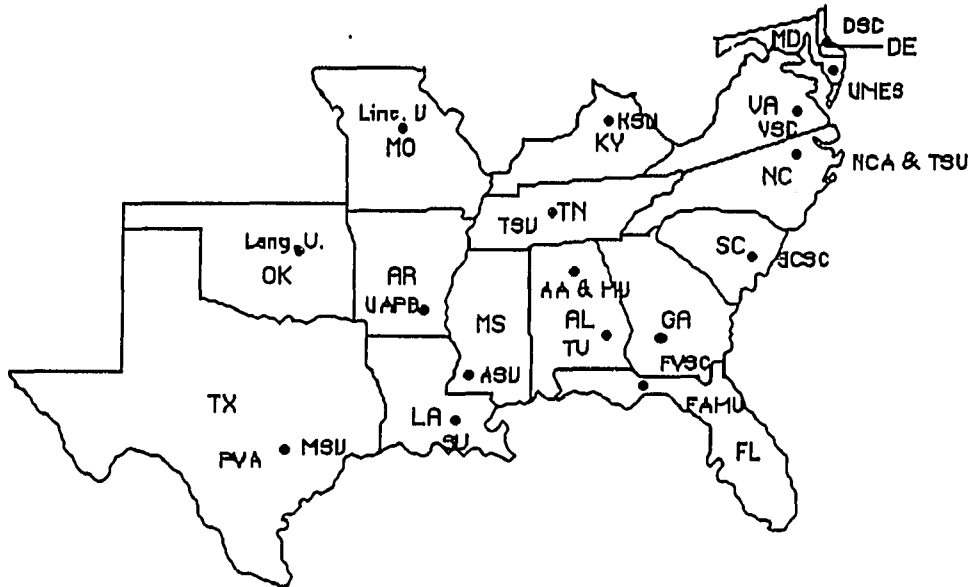


Figure 2. Location of 1890 institutions.

"These institutions provide meaningful points of access and often better odds for retention and attainment for Blacks than are currently evident in other institutions . . . These colleges not only make distinctive contributions to their respective student groups; they also provide cultural and educational support to the wider Black community. In so doing, they enhance the fabric and scope of life for many Blacks, while contributing to an overall cultural and educational diversity in American higher education." (National Advisory Committee on Black Higher Education and Black Colleges & Universities)

Figure 2 is a representation of where all the "1890 land grant" colleges and universities are located. Each academy's official name and founding date follow: Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, Normal, Alabama (1875); Tuskegee University, Tuskegee Institute, Alabama (1881); University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Pine Bluff, Arkansas (1873); Delaware State College, Dover, Delaware (1891); Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Tallahassee, Florida (1887); Fort Valley State College, Fort Valley, Georgia, (1890); Kentucky State University, Frankfort, Kentucky (1886); Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, Baton Rouge, Louisiana (1880); University of Maryland—Eastern Shore, Prince Anne, Maryland (1886); Alcorn State University, Rural Station, Lorman, Mississippi (1871); Lincoln University, Jefferson City, Missouri (1866); North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, Greensboro, North Carolina (1891); Langston University, Langston, OK (1897); South Carolina State College, Orangeburg, South Carolina (1896); Tennessee State University, Nashville, Tennessee (1912); Prairie View A & M University, Prairie View, Texas (1876); Virginia State University, Petersburg, Virginia (1882).

Since the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 (1917) that provided federal funding for education in agriculture below the college level, farming and other aspects of agriculture have undergone great changes. Two major objectives of secondary school agricultural education programs were to prepare youth for careers in farming and to provide training in leadership skills (Thompson, 1989).

To further enhance these educational objectives, African-Americans in "segregated" schools formed the New Farmers of America (NFA, 1928). It must be noted that African-American students in "integrated" schools were able to join the Future Farmers of America (FFA). The NFA lasted until it merged with the FFA in 1964.

The NFA organization was the national organization of African-American students enrolled in vocational agriculture in public secondary school. Its mission was to provide training similar to those available in the FFA. In fact, these organizations were so similar that their emblems were identical, except that the NFA's background was a boll of cotton rather than a cross section of an ear of corn (Tenney, 1978).

The educational impact of the NFA was so great that the author is constantly reminded of this organization by former members. Tenney further reemphasizes the educational significance of this organization in the following two paragraphs:

The value of the NFA as a teaching device to provide participation for its members in leadership and citizenship activities became well recognized in the public schools. The organization had a wholesome influence in developing appreciation for rural living and motivated members to become established as successful farmers in their home communities. The growth and popularity of

the NFA led to the establishment of many additional departments of vocational agriculture in the public schools.

The New Farmers of America added a dignity and pride to the occupation of farming. It was stimulating for a New Farmer to know that he was part of a great national organization made up of similar groups of Black students of vocational agriculture from other states who were interested in agriculture and took part in the challenging activities of the organization (Tenny, 1978, p. 166).

In 1964, when segregation in the public schools was discontinued, 52,000 members of the NFA merged with the FFA. The merger was met with opposition by some of the NFA members, because of the fear of not having their needs met. The organization was chartered for these same fears. They were also proud of their organization. It was providing consistent leaders in agriculture and their communities. Many were fearful they might not receive adequate recognition in the larger FFA (Tenney, 1978).

With the subsequent passage of the vocational education legislation in the 60s and 70s, the National Future Farmers of America (FFA) has experienced a steady decline in membership across the board. Rossetti and McCaslin (1992) stated:

Nationally, enrollment in secondary agricultural education programs and membership in the FFA is declining. The total national FFA membership for 1989 was 397,115 students, but figures had dropped to 383,450 by 1991. In 1991, there were 533,959 students enrolled in secondary agricultural education programs with only 71.8% of the students enrolled as members of the FFA. The FFA organization had its largest membership in 1977 with 507,735 members. Membership declined 24.8% between 1977 and 1991. At the 1988 National FFA convention a constitutional amendment was passed that

officially allowed middle school aged youth membership into the organization. This amendment was seen as a way to increase membership in the organization (p. 212).

African-American student interest in the FFA may have declined during this period because of stiffer competition and a change in the total mission of this organization. These students usually competed in smaller contests on a smaller scale and their success in winning contests became fewer and farther between.

A 1990 study by the United States Department of Agriculture (Higher Ed. Programs, 1990) showed that within the next five to ten years as many as 48,000 job opportunities would be available each year to graduates in agricultural and food sciences, natural resources, and related areas. Conversely, the study showed that there would be a shortage of 5,000 graduates to fill these vacancies annually (1990). The shortage of graduates needed to fill these jobs was described by the USDA report as "critical" (USDA). They also indicated that a critical shortage will occur in the number of minority students educated in agriculture-related fields.

Mays (1990) stated that:

The spirit to produce and invest human capital into America's work force continues to be the foremost mission of land grant institutions. America's capacity to compete domestically and internationally is tied to its commitment to invest in the future of millions of young men and women who far too often languish in the ruins of inequality, poverty, and hopelessness. Today, the U.S. is faced with massive economic challenges that seriously threaten all sectors of our economy and particularly our food, agricultural, and natural resource industries. While major shifts in ethnic populations occur, the nation continues to produce too many millions of graduates who lack the basic skills essential in a competitive world. At the same time we spend 75 billion dollars each year on

social problems associated with educational deprivation, and private industry spends nearly 25 billion dollars annually to produce educated, productive workers (p. 6).

Thompson (1989) stated that there are four groups of factors that might influence African-American students to pursue or not to pursue a career in agriculture.

The first group involves the home. The second group consists of factors related to the school. The third group involves those factors that do not involve the home or school, (society, peers and maturity) and finally, the fourth group consists of students' perceptions about agriculture (Thompson, 1989, p. 9).

Colleges and schools of agriculture have reported declining numbers as high as 22% over the past ten years (Data Book on Illinois Higher Education, 1986). This trend toward declining enrollments is creating a shortage in the supply of individuals with training and expertise in the food and agricultural sciences.

In order for agricultural colleges to guide African-American students into selecting Agriculture as a career choice, they must understand the factors that influence these youth in making their career decisions. Educational and guidance programs in schools need to be studied and evaluated continuously, if they are to be of the greatest assistance to the student as career and related choices are made.

This study was conceived to determine those factors that influence the perceptions of secondary African-American students toward choosing agriculture as a career decision. A better understanding of the African-American students perceptions as they relate to agriculture as an area of

study and career choice, is needed if agricultural educators at various levels are to constructively resolve this problem.

In summation, the key to the recruitment of African-Americans lies in education. Bell and Fritz (1992) stated that:

All students, regardless of gender, need more career information, should be genderless, and should be progressive, addressing traditional and emerging careers. It should contain information about education requirements and salary ranges. Additionally, it should be reinforced by networking with former students pursuing post-secondary education and potential role models (p. 105).

Farmers and farm workers constitute about five percent of the nation's population. Approximately forty percent of the nation's work force is engaged in occupations that service farmers and manufacture or market agricultural products. Many farm residents and the nation's population as a whole, however, do not associate these workers with the agricultural industry.

The purpose of the study was to identify African-American high school students perceptions toward agriculture and careers in agriculture. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Assess the perceptions of African-American high school students toward agriculture,
2. Ascertain the differences between Northern and Southern African-American students' perceptions toward careers in agriculture,
3. Identify those factors which were perceived by African-American students as barriers to awareness of agricultural careers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Related Research

In reviewing past research, documentation of the perceptions of African-Americans regarding agriculture as a career was nonexistent. Research has been done in areas ranging from factors associated with enrollment in agricultural curricula to perceptions of farm men and farm women toward women in nontraditional agricultural work roles (Bunting, 1989). The Educational Indexes, the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, reviews of research, an Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) search, an Agricultural On-Line Access (AGRICOLA) search, textbooks, professional publications, and doctoral dissertations were reviewed to become familiar with studies that have been conducted in the areas of perceptions and recruitment as they related to agriculture.

A report by Slocombe (February, 1986) indicated that enrollment in agricultural curricula at land grant universities has declined nearly 25 percent in the past five years. This trend coupled with the shortage of agricultural scientists and an unusually high percentage of workers in general who are of retirement age, has created a national concern for the expertise needed for the challenges of the 21st Century. As a result of this dilemma, many institutions have taken a renewed interest in recruiting (1986).

Recruitment of students from underrepresented ethnic groups for career opportunities in agriculture and related disciplines has historically been a difficult challenge. In fact, their enrollment in colleges of agriculture

has been much less than those experienced in colleges of business, natural sciences, and engineering. African-American students avoid programs in agriculture because of a major misconception. These students see careers in this area as primarily farming and other production oriented jobs (Gardner, 1991).

The author further stated that to educate underrepresented ethnic groups about agricultural careers, the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) at Michigan State developed the Minority Apprenticeship Program (MAP). This program was designed because of low enrollment during the decade of the seventies. Minorities only represented four percent of the total population of CANR.

This outreach initiative (MAP) was administered annually during a seven week summer period. The program was designed to expose and recruit talented minority students. Once the program ended the students were involved in activities throughout the year. The follow-up activities were designed to steer students to CANR after high school. The main goal of MAP, was to guide high school students into and advance them through a career in agriculture or natural resources (Gardner, 1983).

The author further stated that, "with an increasing emphasis being placed on a global economy, opportunities for professionals with college degrees in disciplines related to agriculture continue to increase. Consequently, it is important that students are aware of career opportunities in agriculture for three major reasons:

1. Excellent employment and career advancement opportunities existing in most agricultural fields.

2. Salaries that are competitive with those obtained by professionals with degrees in business, science and engineering.
3. Agricultural careers that have at its very essence opportunities for business, science and engineering professionals (pp. 12-13).

Reisch (1984) indicated there are few recruitment techniques that have not already been tried. For several years university faculty have extolled the career opportunities in agriculture without really knowing the needs or desires of prospective students.

Problems related to serving underrepresented ethnic group youth were addressed in an Evaluation of Economic and Social Consequences of Cooperative Extension Programs published by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA, 1980) found that their previous guidelines had not clearly identified these groups. The report further stated that since 4-H had not learned how to relate the most effective dimensions of the 4-H experience to the needs of minorities and the disadvantaged, an unconscious institutional, economic and racial discrimination pattern had developed (USDA).

Reaching and serving minority populations will require greater consideration in the future. Emerging demographic trends impact the Cooperative Extension Service and its 4-H component. The organization will face the challenge of becoming responsive to an increasing ethnically diverse population. The Task Force on Diversity sponsored by the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (Extension Committee, 1990) recognized that:

The ability of the Cooperative Extension Service to play a pivotal role in meeting educational needs in the future is dependent upon its ability to expand its programs to

access both diversity and traditional audiences, and its capacity to reflect diversity at all levels of the system (ECOP, 1990, p. 1).

Bankston and Cano (1992) stated that minority youth held limited knowledge about 4-H programs because of a lack of advertising in the media. Parents of these youth stated that advertisement for 4-H programs was written in difficult language and did not depict minorities in the advertisement. They thought most African-Americans did not know about 4-H. There is a lack of advertisement.

As far as the publicity, I see the commercials on television. When you see it, it's the white kids you see in a commercial on television. They are on animals and black kids feel it has to do with farming, and no one is going to try for animals. Public or community center workshops is another way to promote, and the material you use should be comics. It should not be complex; that way you can get the kids and the parents (Bankston & Cano, 1992, p. 28).

Bankston and Cano (1992) further indicated that youth and parents cited the lack of role models as a barrier to participation. The hiring of minority agents, assistants, and leaders served as a catalyst for getting youth involved and retaining them in the program. Youth and parents perceived 4-H as an organization for rural white youth with farm animals since many of the competitive events at state and county fairs involved animals. It was recommended that 4-H reevaluate its existing program thrust from a focus on a farming to one that is adapted to an urban environment (including animals used as pets). The Cooperative Extension Service should make a critical

analysis of the project judging procedures and guidelines for training judges to sensitize them toward fairness to all (1992).

Many students make career decisions prior to their junior year. Juniors in high school listed a stable career with a secure future as their top priority in choosing their career path (American College Testing Program, 1989). Their second priority was to make a large income. Making a contribution to society and being their own boss was their lowest priority. When asked about careers in agriculture the students felt that a career in agriculture rated highest in making a contribution to society and lowest in providing a secure and stable future. They did not feel agricultural careers would afford them a large income (American College Testing Program, 1989).

Golladay stated that there were at least two misconceptions that students held about careers in agriculture. The first misconception was that students with limited academic abilities can succeed in an agricultural occupation, and the second was that vocational agriculture is for someone else's child (1981). He further expressed the importance to understand initially the role of information processing as an underlying factor in the formation of beliefs.

That is, individuals form beliefs about themselves, other people, institutions, behaviors, and activities based on direct experience, media, information, or logical inference. These beliefs about an object, regardless of where they are obtained, influences a person's attitude toward the object. Beliefs represent the information a person has about an object. An individual's attitude toward participation in an agricultural career, for example, is a function of the beliefs about agriculture in general (p. 187).

If the totality of this individual's beliefs about agriculture is associated with positive attributes of this activity, i.e., pursuing a career in agriculture, then the attitude toward this activity will tend to be favorable (Groteleuchen & Caulley, 1977). As Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) stated: "It can be said that a person's attitude toward some object is determined by his belief that the object has certain attributes and by his evaluation of these attributes (p. 7)."

Similarly, the attitude a person has toward an object is related to the person's intention to perform a variety of behaviors with respect to an object. Attitude is thus instrumental in predisposing a set of intentions toward behaviors associated with an object. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) "an attitude represents a person's general feelings of favorableness or unfavorableness towards some stimulus object (p. 8)." In terms of Fishbein's framework, as an individual forms beliefs about participation, he or she automatically and simultaneously acquires an attitude toward participation. Individuals' attitudes are dependent on their judgment of the worth of these consequences (Groteleuschen & Caulley, 1977).

Findlay and Rawls (1984) found that parents and college professors provided the most influence to students to major in an agricultural curricula. Cole (1985), Faulks (1969), and Miller (1984) found the vocational agriculture instructor influenced students the most to major in agricultural education. They reported additional factors that influenced students were cooperative extension personnel, friends, high school counselors, 4-H leaders, university students and other high school teachers. The immediate impact each factor had was based on the situation and personal characteristics of each student.

Carter and Leibold (1987) stated that the universities need to share information about opportunities in agriculture through literature and student ambassadors, and recruiters should be used to accentuate enrollment. Betts and Newcomb (1986) suggested working with science teachers in urban areas and providing them with interesting agricultural information that could be integrated into the curricula. Smith (1989) challenged colleges of agriculture to integrate communication, leadership, and social skills along with a perspective of world issues and cultures into curricula. Love and Yoder (1989) recommended the formation of a National Commission to develop strategies for informing students about agricultural careers.

United States agriculture leads the world in meeting the needs of a growing population with a reduced supply of resources. It is an industry that has become increasingly complex and technologically advanced, thus requiring a stable supply of well-trained and highly educated professionals to ensure its future success (Betts and Newcomb, 1986).

These authors further suggested that the primary source of such professionals has traditionally been colleges of agriculture that provide slightly more than 65% of the individuals needed. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, agricultural college enrollments increased tremendously. However, since 1978, enrollment in the land grant colleges of agriculture has declined nearly 25%, and during the 1980s the overall demand for food and agriculture science graduates exceeded the supply by 13%. Because of the national and international importance of agriculture, the lack of qualified professionals threatens not only the agricultural industry, but also the entire United States economy and the global community (Betts and Newcomb, 1986).

The declining enrollments in agricultural programs at the secondary and post-secondary levels may be attributed to several factors. Some of these include a changing agricultural economy in the late 1970s, which contributed to the decline in the scope of the farming sector. It is the opinion of the writer that the interest of African-American youth began to change from one of an environmental orientation to one of a monetary orientation. The trend toward more urbanization found families moving from rural communities and small towns to larger towns and cities. As demographics changed, local agricultural programs generally failed to broaden the curriculum to include information on current practices and opportunities in agriculture. The requirements imposed upon high school students in the 1980s reduced the number of students able to enroll in agricultural programs, thus fewer agricultural programs exist today to inform the public about the nature of agriculture in society today (Thompson, 1989).

The agricultural sector tends to be perceived by high school youth and the general public as "production" and "farming" (Russell, 1986; Coulter, 1985; Kirts, 1983). Agriculture and careers in agriculture have in recent years suffered from a negative image. In a study conducted by Mallory and Sommer (1986), California High School students were unaware of the range of opportunities in agricultural careers. They perceived agriculture as farming alone, or in some cases do not even know the meaning of the word.

Kaufman (1967) suggested that one of the most fundamental but often neglected findings of modern science is that people do not respond to reality, but to their perceptions of reality. This perception of reality regarding opportunities in agriculture would appear to have been enhanced by television

reports, front-page news stories, and popular movies solely depicting the “farm problem” and the struggling farm family (Coulter, 1985). The preceding information may suggest that career opportunities in the field of agriculture are narrow in scope and commonly perceived by youth and the general public to be no greater than just farming or ranching (Thompson, 1989).

African-American students need to be educated about the national importance of agriculture as a career. A report by the Human Capital Task Force (1989) stated that:

The expertise base that supports the U.S. Food and Agricultural system is seriously eroded and must be revitalized. Strategically, our nation's security is clearly dependent upon the requisite expertise to conduct the science and business of producing and distributing our future food while carefully managing our natural resources (p. 3).

Mosley (1987) stated that recruiting programs should not be designed primarily to persuade students to choose agriculture over other majors. Recruiting programs should be developed that make potential students aware of the opportunities in agriculture and to see these as viable options as they make career choices.

Based on the review, the following conclusions can be drawn. Agriculture as a whole in the United States is in trouble because of a lack of infusing new blood into its system. By the year 2010, the so-called majority populace in the United States will be the minority. With this being the case, America can no longer neglect the education of African-Americans into areas of strategic (agriculture) importance to this country. Without an ample food supply, a country can not exist independently.

Through educational programs, African-American and other underrepresented ethnic groups would be given choices and opportunities to change their attitudes toward agriculture from one of just farming to The MAP at Michigan State is an excellent program for educating African-Americans and it has been adapted very successfully at other universities.

Many explanations have been offered on why there are no African-Americans in agriculture. In the author's opinion the biggest factor is the lack of awareness of the broad range of employment opportunities available to college graduates in agriculture.

Related Literature

Bodgan and Biklen (1992) state that the term "qualitative research" was not used in the social sciences until the late 1960's.

We use qualitative research as an umbrella term to refer to several research strategies that share certain characteristics. The data collected have been termed soft, that is, rich in description of people, places, and conversations, and not easily handled by statistical procedures. Research questions are not framed by operationalizing variables; rather, they are formulated to investigate topics in all their complexity, in context.

While people conducting qualitative research may develop a focus as they collect data, they do not approach the research with specific questions to answer or hypotheses to test. They also are concerned with understanding behavior from the subjects frame of reference. External causes are of secondary importance. They tend to collect their data through sustained contact with people in settings where subjects normally spend their time.

These authors further state that participant observation and in-depth interviewing are the two integral parts of qualitative research. The researcher develops a vested interest in his subjects by gaining their trust. The five characteristics of qualitative research as described by Bogdan and Biklen are as follows:

1. Qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument.
2. Qualitative research is descriptive.
3. Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products.
4. Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively.
5. "Meaning" is of essential concern to the qualitative approach (pp. 29-32).

The perspective of the subject is of utmost importance to the qualitative researcher. Some researchers who use videotape show the completed tapes to the participants in order to check their own interpretations with those of the informants (Mehan, 1978). Other researchers may show drafts of articles or interview transcripts to key informants. Still others may verbally check out perspectives with subjects (Grant, 1988).

Krueger (1988) states:

Focus group interviews typically have five characteristics or features. These characteristics relate to the ingredients of focus groups: (a) people, who (b) possess certain characteristics, (c) provide data (d) of qualitative nature (e) in a focused discussion (p. 27). He further remarks that (1) careful recruitment of participants through systematic recruitment

procedures; having 5 to 10 people per group, similar types of people, usually people don't know each other and 3 to 4 groups; (2) proper meeting environment; neutral setting, circle seating, tape-recorded; (3) skillful moderator: trained, uses pre-determined questions, establishes a permissive environment; (4) appropriate analysis and reporting: systematic analysis, verifiable procedures and appropriate reporting (p. 20).

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Definition of Terms

To limit the possibilities of misinterpretation of terms, the following terms and their definitions were used in this study.

African-American--(ISU, 1992) black, not of Hispanic origin, persons having origins in any of the black racial groups in Africa.

Agricultural Careers--200 jobs and positions in the field of agriculture, involving farming, agribusiness, communications, science, government, education, processing and distribution, marketing and sales, and other occupations that serve production agriculture or other segments of the agricultural industry (Agricultural Labor Market Information Committee, 1983, p. 2).

Attitude--a tendency or disposition to evaluate an object or the symbol of that object in a certain way (Wenrich & Crowley, 1964, p. 5). It includes ideas, perceptions, opinions, and beliefs that respondents have about agriculture.

Agriculture--the raising of plants and animals for food, fiber, and aesthetic qualities. It involves the processing and distribution of the end products (Thompson, 1989).

Belief--a person's subjective judgment about a given object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 131).

Career choice--A tentative or final decision an individual makes in preparation for looking for an occupation in one career area as opposed to another (Hoppock, 1976).

Counselor--an individual certified by a particular state to provide a planned program of guidance services to assist public high school students in selecting and preparing for vocations and careers.

Opinion--a conclusion or judgment, which seems true, valid or probable to one's own mind; a belief not based on absolute certainty or positive knowledge (Guralink, 1982, p. 997).

Perception--the mental grasp of an object or concept usually through insight or intuition (Guralink, 1982, p. 1054).

Student--a person holding at least freshman status or above in a public high school.

Focus group--a special type of group in terms of purpose, size, composition, and procedures. It is composed of four to twelve participants who are unfamiliar to each other. These participants are selected because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic of the focus group (Krueger, 1988)

Underrepresented ethnic group (minority)--(ISU, 1992) person of the following ethnicities, black, Asians, Hispanics or Native American.

Description of Design

The focus group discussion was chosen because of the subject (perceptions) dealt with in this study. When dealing with high school age students, the least effective way to retrieve perceptions is with quantitative research methods (survey). Krueger (1989) stated that the most critical stage of the interview is in the first few moments:

In a brief time the moderator must create a thoughtful, permissive atmosphere, provide the ground rules, and set the tone of the discussion. Much of the success of group interviewing can be attributed to the development of this environment.

He further recommended a pattern for introducing the group discussion: "(1) the welcome, (2) the overview and topic, (3) the ground rules, and (4) the first question (p. 4)." Typically, a focus group interview lasts for 90 to 120 minutes. The 90 minute cassette tapes are usually used, however, the interview might spill over on to the second tape. The focus group is more personable, and holistic and people like to talk about themselves if they feel the time spent is worthwhile and their stories will be safely confidential and treated with respect. The author's philosophical values are one of a "hands on" approach to extrapolating information. Campbell and Martin (1992) stated that: "The kinds of questions that lead to an understanding of people in "non high-tech" cultures are not typical questions in the traditional scientific, reductionistic view of research (p. 13)."

Through the qualitative approach there are possibilities of changing the instrument and starting over. As the collection of information develops, new information and patterns will emerge that will lead to changing the questioning format.

To implement the objectives of the study, five steps were taken: (1) selection of population and sample, (2) development of an instrument, (3) development of a framework for collecting data, (4) collection of data, and (5) analysis of the data. The research design, populations and samples, instrumentation, data collection and analysis of data are described in the following paragraph.

Selection of Population and Sample

The population for the study consisted of African-American students ranging in grades nine through twelve who were enrolled in four school attendance centers in the Davenport Community School District of Iowa, and one school in the state of Alabama. The schools involved were four in Davenport, Wood Junior High School, J. B. Young Junior High School, North Senior High School, and Central High School and Wilcox Central High School in Alabama. The population for this investigation consisted of four focus groups from each school district. These school districts were selected for this study because of their unique characteristics. The Davenport Community School District was chosen based on data from the Iowa Census Bureau. The 1990 census showed that this district had the highest (35%) percentage of underrepresented ethnic groups in the state of Iowa. (2) The Wilcox County School District (Alabama), was selected based on its large representation of underrepresented ethnic groups (99%) and the familiarity of the author with the district.

The contact for the school districts was made by a letter, explaining the intended activities during and after the research. These letters were sent to the school counselor and the Assistant Superintendent. Once the confirmation to work with the students was received, an instrument that would retrieve the totality of the students thoughts was developed. The focus group methodology was used for the data collection.

The focus group is a method that involves people. Krueger (1988) defined focus groups as “(a) people, who (b) possess certain characteristics, (c) provide

data (d) of a qualitative nature and (e) in a focused discussion.” The focus group method was used because it is designed to obtain a particular kind of information that is difficult to obtain with other methodological procedures.

The students were randomly selected by their individual counselors. The counselors were instructed to select students whose last names began with a letter from the first twelve letters of the alphabet. The teenagers involved in these groups were from the general school population. They were not members of an agricultural class.

Instrumentation

From the beginning of this study, it was clear that not only had no studies been conducted on African-American perceptions about agriculture and careers in agriculture, but that limited literature existed. The instrument developed was partially based on the investigator’s own experiences, interviews with extension personnel, faculty, MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences) members, and from review of relevant literature. The questionnaire was constantly revised to avoid being dichotomous. When questions were dichotomous, they could be answered with a “yes” or “no” response. This was achieved through the following seven steps.

1. Reviewing relevant literature relating to peoples perceptions about agriculture.
2. Reviewing literature relating to focus groups.
3. Reviewing other relevant literature.
4. Developing key questions that were relevant to the objectives of the study.
5. Formalizing the question into a focus group discussion questionnaire.
6. Reviewing of the questionnaire by extension personnel, faculty, and MANRRS members.

7. Producing the final draft for the focus group discussion questionnaire.

During the first step the researcher worked with MANRRS national office to find relevant literature about the topic.

The second and third step involved analyzing the literature obtained by the search of ERIC, Dissertations, Agricola, Journals, and the USDA, specifically looking for relevant literature in general perceptions toward agriculture, women in agriculture and enrollment in agricultural colleges.

The investigator developed questions and questionnaire formats during the fourth and fifth steps. During this process we received approval for the research project from Iowa State University's Human Subjects Committee. The resulting questionnaire was individually taken to the other members of the researcher's program of student committee and extension specialists at Iowa State University.

After adjusting the questionnaire to the comments of the committee members and extension specialists, the questions were tested on African-American students at Roosevelt and North High Schools in Des Moines, Iowa.

After factoring in the suggestions of the committee members, the extension specialists and in consultation with his major professor, the investigator produced the final questionnaire.

Questionnaire for Students

The questionnaire was developed using the following criteria.

- (1) Use open-ended questions
e.g., What did you think of the program?
- (2) Avoid dichotomous questions
e.g., Questions that can be answered yes or no.

- (3) Why? is rarely asked
e.g., Makes people defensive.
- (4) Carefully prepare focus questions.
e.g., a. opening question
b. introductory question
c. transition questions
d. key questions
- (5) Use “think back” questions.
e.g., use past experiences.
- (6) Focus the questions
e.g., general--specific (Debus, 1990)

The instrument consisted of twelve questions, with the first two being “throw away” questions. These questions were easy questions to get the students talking. The following questions went right into their perceptions of agriculture and its career choices. The focus group was chosen because of the breadth of information that was collected across a larger number of cases.

Data Collection

The researchers traveled to the select schools to perform the focus group discussion designated by the school counselors. The initial contact with the students was through their school’s counselor. Then a letter was mailed to the superintendent. Personal calls were made to ensure that date, time and location were set. Before arriving at the schools the researcher held two training sessions for the assistant moderator and himself. The assistant moderator had to follow twelve rules. The rules for the assistant follow:

- 1. Take responsibility for all equipment,
- 2. Take responsibility for refreshments,
- 3. Arrange the room,
- 4. Set up the equipment,
- 5. Welcome participants as they arrive,
- 6. Sit in designated location,
- 7. Take notes throughout the discussion,
- 8. Monitor recording equipment,

9. Do not participate in the discussion,
10. Ask questions when invited,
11. Debriefing,
12. Feedback on analysis (Krueger, 1989, p. 11).

Some skills that were needed by the moderator were:

- “Be rested and alert for the focus group session.
- Practice introduction without referring to notes.
- Remember questions without referring to notes.
- Be cautious to avoid head nodding.
- Avoid comments that signal approval.
- Avoid giving personal opinion (Krueger, 1989, p. 4).”

Analysis of Data

The focus groups were audio taped for the purpose of later analysis. The data were transcribed and summarized based on the interview questions (Bankston and Cano, 1992).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter focuses on providing information that satisfies the purpose and objectives of this study. The purpose of this study was to identify African-American high school students' perceptions toward agriculture and careers in agriculture. The information for these groups was gathered using the focus group interview. The instrument consisted of twelve questions with the first two questions being "throw away" or orientation questions. The following questions focused on the participants' perceptions of agriculture and career choices. The participating students were from the Davenport Community School District in Iowa, and the Wilcox County School District in Alabama. The students were placed in focus groups of four based on the following characteristics: males, 9th and 10th grades; males 11th and 12th grades; females, 9th and 10th grades and females, 11th and 12th grades.

The specific objectives of the study were to: (1) assess the perceptions of African-American high school students toward agriculture, (2) ascertain the differences between Northern and Southern African-American students' perceptions toward careers in agriculture, and (3) identify those factors which were perceived by African-American students as barriers to awareness of agricultural careers.

Perceptions of Agriculture

The main objective of the study was to assess the perception of African-American High School students toward agriculture.

Orientation responses

The following two questions were referred to as lead in questions. Lead in questions (throw away) delved into the students thought patterns and attempted to obtain responses. The questions and responses follow: (1) What are some of the subjects you enjoyed in school? Why? Which do you like least? Why? Remarks from Iowa students were: "courses that are creative." Why? "Because the rules aren't so strict, like with math, there's only one right way." "I like speech. Because I like to speak out in front of everybody." "English because we read stories and really don't get nothing out of them." The responses from Alabama students were: "I like math." Why? "It's easy. My father he taught me the math, you know how to do adding and things like that." "I like science." Why? "Because it's dealing with life." "I like computer class because I like playing on the computer."

The second lead in question was: What are your plans after you finish high school? Fifty-seven percent of Iowa students responses were: "I'll go to college." "Yes, I want to go to college in Georgia and I want to take up law school or fashion." This student seemed so adamant about law school so I had to ask her why. Her reply was "she liked defending people." The responses from Alabama were similar to the students in Iowa (Figure 3). They were similar in the sense that fifty percent of the students wanted to attend college, nineteen percent wanted to attend junior college, and nineteen percent wanted to join the military. Only one student strayed from this norm. He wanted to travel before he went to college.

This figure revealed that almost seventy percent of the students from Alabama planned to attend some form of higher education. In contrast , fifty-

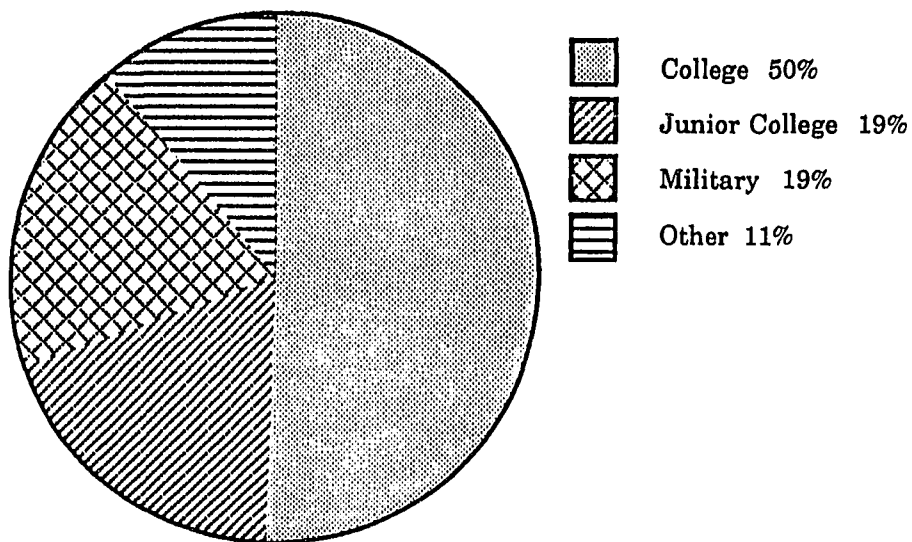
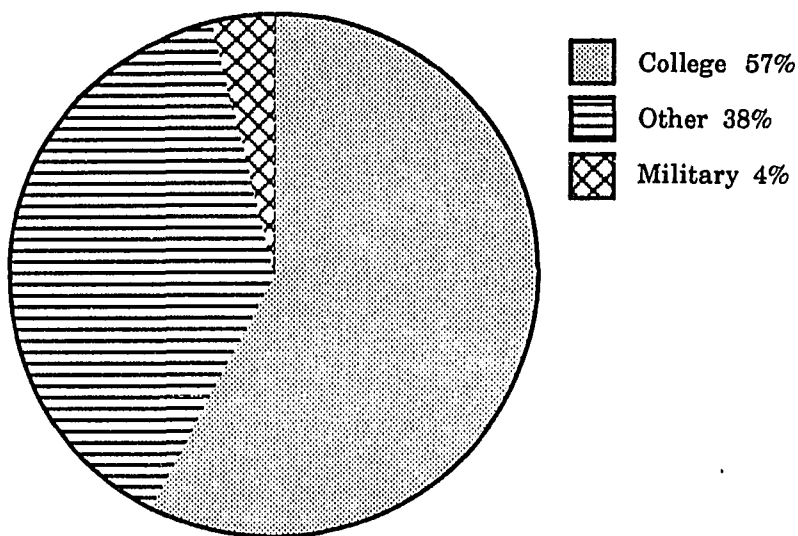
Alabama**Iowa**

Figure 3. Opinions on "What are your plans after you finish high school?"

seven percent of the students in Iowa were seeking some form of higher education. What does this mean? By having more role models that are African-American, the students from Alabama believe that they will attend the academy.

Objective responses

(3) When you hear the word "agriculture," what comes to mind? The Iowa responses were as follows: "Sand and dirt and dust." "Trees and grass, mud, sand." "John Deere and tractors." "Animals and farms." "India." Why? "I don't know." "Detasseling and picking corn. This was a summer job that I quit." "IBP." "Black people."

Alabama responses included: "Farming." "Building things." "Trees." "Forests." "Cows, horses." "Work." "Hard work as well as good work." "Selling cows." "Soil and dirt." "Logging." Why Logging? "My father owns a logging company." "Money." "I experienced owning some cows and horses, I made a profit from them," "Insects."

(4) Do you think people have a bad image of people in agriculture? If so, tell me some of the bad images. Iowa responses were: "No. Not a bad image, but sometimes they're not, they're not fairly treated. Well, like just certain laws. I don't know, it's harder for farmers I know, to get by, on their salaries on what they make, but I think like if there's engineers involved in it, I know that takes a lot of training and skill. I respect that." "I just think farmers aren't fairly treated--their salaries, they deserve more for what they do." "I never really thought about it," "They put too many chemicals in water."

The Alabama responses were a little different. Here is an example: "No, smart kids do, like agriculture." Why? "You know they are the upper classmen, they can't get their hands dirty, they don't want to be there--I can't do that. I'm going in architecture, whatever, criminal justice and just sit in my suit all day and reading that book. Something like that." "Dumb farmer." "I think if a person wanted to be interested in agriculture, um it's not, you know, people don't have to you know, get angry . . . if they think they are doing the job wrong, because if you think about agriculture, you probably know to get the job done right." "Most people think it's boring , but I think it's fun, because you get to enjoy nature." "When people try and sell stuff, people don't want to buy it." "Good money."

"I think it is a good image." "I think it's a bad image." "A good image, because you need to learn more about the world and help make the world a better place. By keeping it clean and not cutting down the trees and stuff, but they have to cut down the trees in order to get paper." "I think agriculture work is seasonal." "Yes, because anybody that goes and looks at someone else's farm or something, they see something that they could do to it to make it better so I think they down people alot." "They say that you're not feeding your cows properly or you're not planting your grass at the right time, things like that." "People say that we're not cutting the wood properly."

Discussion of responses to objective questions

The purpose of this section was to summarize the assessment of the perceptions of African-American high school students toward in agriculture. The students perceptions were limited to careers of just low-paying jobs at

factories to simply farming. The overwhelming majority of these student's responses to the orientation questions were positive responses. The majority liked most of their classes and were going to college. These students did not relate going to college as having anything to do with agriculture. These students thought agriculture was just farming (production agriculture) as a whole and they did not perceive college as having anything to do with agriculture.

Perceptions Toward Careers

The second objective of the study was to ascertain the differences between Northern and Southern African-American students perceptions toward careers in agriculture. The questions that would satisfy this objective were the fifth and sixth questions on the focus group instrument. Those questions were: (5) Does anyone in your family, community, church or friends, work in agriculture (USDA, SCS, 4-H, florist, landscaping, drive trucks)? and (6) What have they said about opportunities in agriculture? Are they satisfied with their jobs?

Objective responses

(5) Does anyone in your family, community, church or friends work in agriculture (USDA, SCS, 4-H, florist, landscaping, drive trucks)? The Iowa responses were very interesting. One student provided the following response. "My brother worked at IBP but quit after 3 days because it smelled so bad. He was um the one that killed the animals, cleaned it, and cut it up. He said that he couldn't stand it, because it smelled bad and um . . . one day he was cutting up a cow and there was a female and inside there was a calf still alive and he

had to kill it and so after that he just quit." He was very emotional telling this story. The other comments follow.

"I have a friend who lives on a farm in Walcott." "I know some people who work at John Deere." "My Grandpa owns a flower shop." "Neighbor has a small greenhouse." "My brother worked at IBP."

The Alabama respondents were adept at answering these questions. "My uncle drives a log truck." "Dad works on a farm." "Works for Alabama River Pulp Co." "Grandparents own small farm." "My stepfather and uncle works at MacMillan Bloedel." "Father." "My aunt raises chickens." "My uncle raises cows and hogs and chickens," "My father is a forest ranger." "My daddy owns a logging company."

Forty-seven percent of the students in Iowa knew an individual who worked in agriculture, conversely, nearly seventy percent of the Alabama students knew someone who worked in agriculture (Figure 4).

(6) What have they said to you about opportunities in agriculture? Are they satisfied with their jobs? Iowa responses include: "... She tells me it's a good job." "She can make alot of money, but it's tiring and hard work." "She likes it." "My grandfather likes working with flowers." "He said he's glad he went into it and he's glad he's out of there (Case I H). It was hard work." My grandmother used to work at International Harvester. She had to quit because of her legs. But, she said she liked it." "Never talks about work." "Yeah, he gets paid, so he likes it, you know." "Brother hated working for IBP, when he cut open a cow, a live calf came out and ran around the place." "Always the money. They do get paid good money and have very good benefits." Alabama responses include: "... she tells me it's a good job. She can make alot of

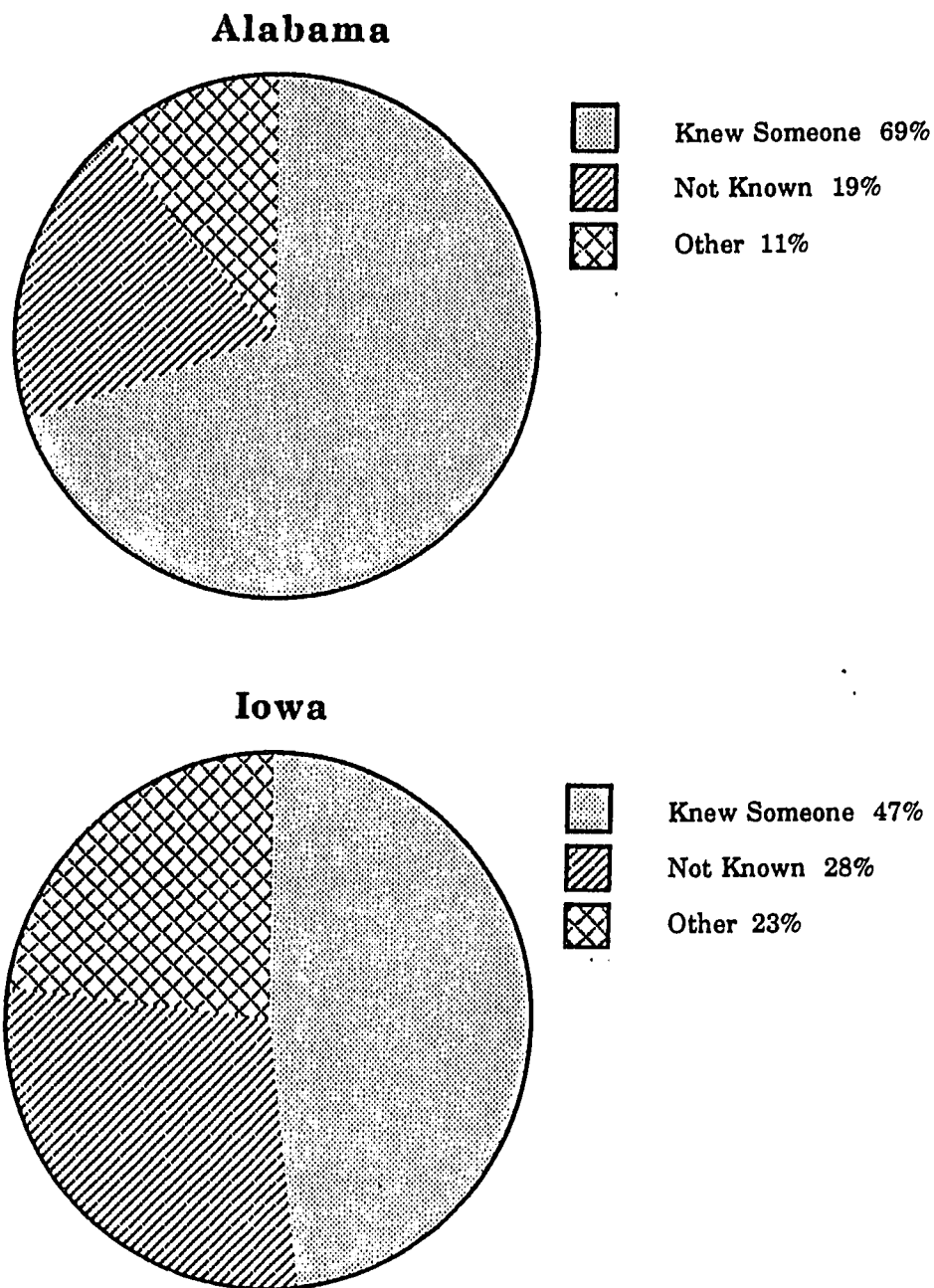


Figure 4. Opinions on knowing somebody who works in agriculture.

money, but it's tiring and hard work." "The pay is good." "He said, you know, a garden, like you know, . . . learn how to plant stuff like collard greens, okra, and all the peas, and learn how to support your family." "My uncle said, he told me, work in a paper mill, it ain't something you just want to get into. He said the reason why he got in there was because he didn't have a good education and right then, it was all open to a black man. He told me to go to school and get a good education, set my goals real high." "My grandparents, like I said, they always farm and basically, I'm glad that they know that I have been around to learn something about farming, because in years to come, by planting more food, like vegetables and stuff like that, that the food that they are producing, putting on the market these days is really causing them concern and everything like that. There are alot of jobs."

Orientation responses

This section did not have lead in questions.

Discussion

The purpose of this section was to ascertain the differences between Northern and Southern African-American students perceptions toward careers in agriculture. The southern students had more opportunities to identify with diverse mentors in the field of agriculture. They had three Home Economics teachers, three agricultural education teachers, and four vocational teachers at their high school. The northern students did not have a concept of what a vocational teacher was. To further illustrate this point the students from the north viewed agriculture careers from a smaller scope, and industrial (processing) base. Conversely, the overwhelming majority of the

students from the south viewed agriculture from all phases (extension, teaching, farming, industrial work, and stewardship) ranging from production to the processing side. They had a working knowledge of the breadth of careers in agriculture.

But, both groups still held an image of agriculture that was consistent. Of all respondents, thirty-eight percent of both groups perceived agriculture as having a bad image. Twenty-four percent of the students from the north thought agriculture held a good image, as compared to twenty-seven percent of the students from the south. (Figure 5.)

Barriers to Awareness of Agriculture

The final objective of this research project was to identify those factors which were perceived, by African-American students, as barriers to awareness of agricultural careers.

Orientation responses

This section entailed several lead in questions for the final objective. The questions were: Some teachers talk about different career opportunities. Have your teachers or counselors mentioned agricultural careers? If so, what did they say? (7) Have you asked teachers or counselors about opportunities in agriculture? What was their response? (8) Are you considering a career in agriculture? Why? Why not? (9) The final question stated: What is it about agriculture that would make you want to work in the area?

The responses to the question: "Have your teachers mentioned agriculture as a career?" were basically the same for both states. The students in Iowa said no one had mentioned agriculture as a career of choice. About

one third of the students from Alabama stated that their teachers had mentioned agriculture as a career. Again, it was noted that the students in Alabama were exposed to eight to ten vocational teachers at their school.

The responses to question number eight were about the same as the response to question number seven. The students from Iowa did not have “a clue” to what agriculture was let alone ask a question about it. A few of the students from Alabama had asked about career opportunities.

The next question was: Are you considering a career in agriculture? Why or why not? The students in Iowa looked at me strangely on this question and most of them stated again: “No, I just want to major in something else.” Some of the students in Alabama had a more favorable response for this question. One of the female participants stated “I have thought about it. But I ain’t sure.” And another example a student cited “It isn’t a reason that we don’t want to be in agriculture, but you can take up that kind of stuff anytime.”

Objective responses

The questions that pertain to this objective follow: (10) What is it about agriculture that would make you want to work in the area? (12) Do you have any final thoughts about agriculture as a field in which to work?

The next question that was very probing is as follows: What is it about agriculture that would make you want to work in the area? “I think they should teach more, have classes every so often and put more into textbooks about it. . . . tell us about what happened in the war and that stuff and have more about Black history and stuff and teaching us more about . . .” “Seems like Black people have been trying to get ahead and they’re not thinking about

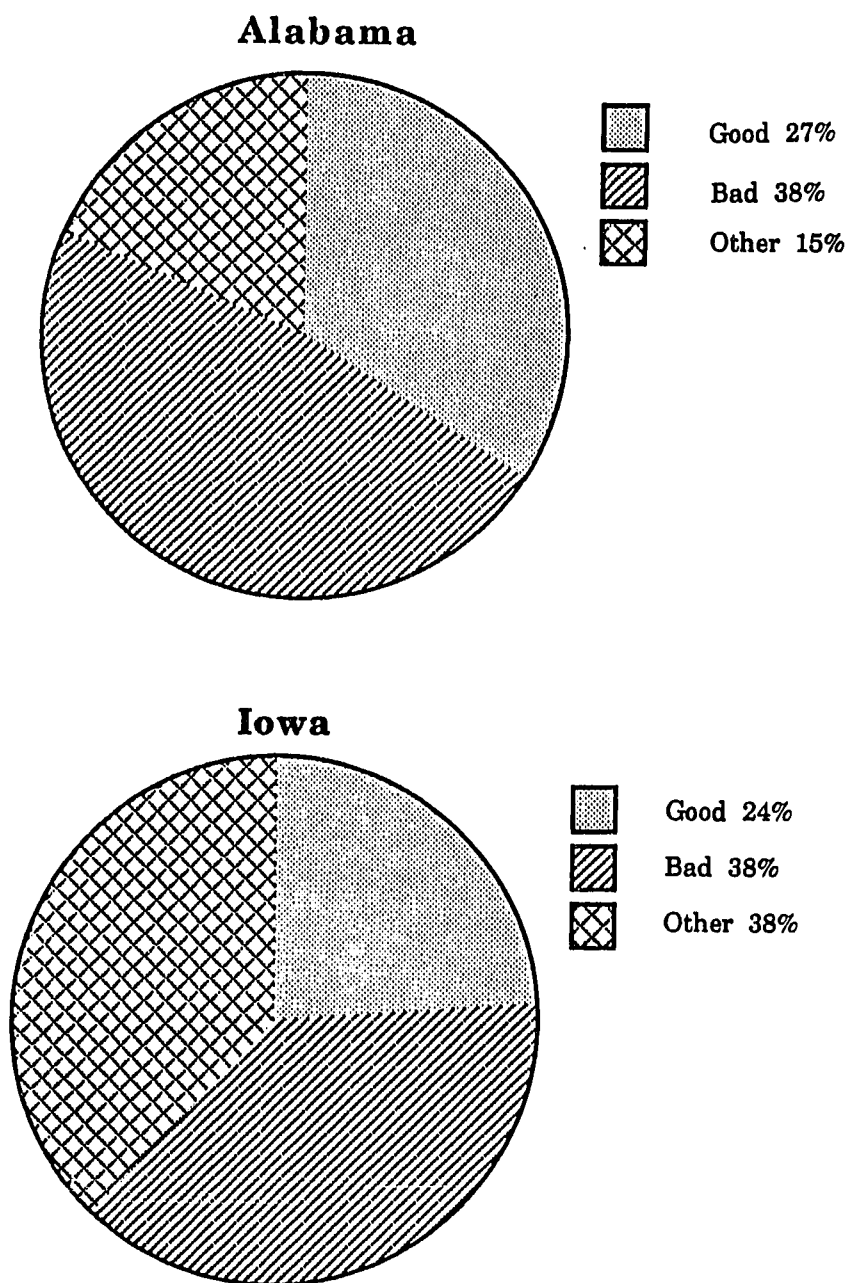


Figure 5. Opinions on when you hear the word "agriculture," what comes to mind?

going into agriculture, they're trying to get more ahead in corporate America or whatever than they are with agriculture." "Well, explain to them what it is. Like Lawrence said, what you are doing now." "They don't know what it is and it's a long word. So they're scared of it right away. I don't want to get into that, that sounds like hard work." "Really, start out early with the younger generation in the lower schools. Lower grades." "I think talk about it more and like she said, take 'em on field trips and stuff." "Money." "Change the amount of chemicals and pesticides being used." "I can put my own food on my own table and save some money." "Owning my own business." "Own my own landscaping business." "Make my own clothes." "Like working with plants." "Changing the number of animals they kill, you know they made the buffalo extinct." "Too much tampering with nature in the long run, somewhere down the line it messes up the genetics and produces a bad offspring."

The Alabama responses follow: "I want to work in forestry because I grew up around it." "Making the world more beautiful." Do you have any final thoughts about agriculture as a field in which to work?

Iowa responses include: "Making clothes and putting food on my own table, makes me want to work in the area." "We need to know what agriculture spans over." "I really wouldn't want to work in agriculture." "I don't see myself as being a farmer." "I want to be a marine biologist." "I could see myself doing it now, now that we discussed it." "Um . . . that's just all I see on commercials is the white farmer and pesticides and corn. You don't see. You don't see any . . . they don't ever show on TV a Black farmer and his family on a farm." "Agriculture is a part of our lives, you know, alot. Like the water you

drink, the clothes we are wearing, everything, everything we do has to deal with agriculture, not just sand and trees, especially.”

Alabama responses include: “When I first came in here, I was thinking about agriculture as another subject major in college, but now I really think that I’ll major in it in the end.” “I always want to work in a greenhouse or I think I would like agriculture.” “First, I hadn’t thought about it. I think I thought about it now. I’d like to work in the field of agriculture.” “It’s a good field because it’s a well, a good paying job.” “I learned alot. Alot of things I never thought of there was um, in agriculture and never thought about it.” “Yeah, you changed my mind. I think I want to major in it now.” “I was thinking that since there aren’t that many Black people in agriculture that there will be alot of job advancements for Black people and that they could earn a lot of money and the field of agriculture.”

Discussion

The purpose of this section was to identify those factors which were perceived by African-American students as barriers to awareness of agricultural careers (Table 1). The resounding response to this objective was education through field trips, mentorships, and career awareness.

This study has shown that the African-American high school students who participated in the study have little or no knowledge, awareness and/or aptitude for agriculture (careers) as a whole. This study was designed to investigate the following objectives: (1) the perceptions of African-American high school students toward agriculture, (2) the differences between Northern and Southern African-American students perceptions toward careers in

Table 1. Focus Group Dynamics

Focus Groups				
Iowa		Alabama		Total
Males	Females	Males	Females	
Group A N=6	Group C N=4	Group E N=5	Group C N=7	
Group B N=5	Group D N=6	Group F N=6	Group D N=8	
11	10	11	15	N=47

agriculture, and (3) identify those factors which were perceived by African-American students as barriers to awareness of agricultural careers.

Iowa students' main perceptions about agriculture dealt with horror stories from family members who work at the Iowa Beef and Pork Company (IBP). Iowa students' relatives perceived jobs in this company to require skills for unintelligent people, but found the salaries to be an asset.

The perception of agriculture with the Alabama students were centered around the McMillian Bloedel Company (pulpwood industry). These jobs were "few and far between," but good paying and were perceived by the students to not require skills and intelligence.

In addressing the issue of the second objective, both groups of students perceived careers in agriculture as little more than skill-less occupations that required little or no education at all. Here are examples of this case in point: "She tells me it's a good job. She can make a lot of money, but it's tiring and

hard work.” “My father say that it is a good job. Of course it is a good job--working with wood, but instead, he wants me to aim higher and get a better job.”

Those factors that were perceived by African-American students as barriers to careers in agriculture were as follows: lack of education and the opportunity to obtain additional career information. The students further stated, that this problem could be addressed through field trips, speakers, and other activities.

In summation, the findings show that as a whole, the two groups had a very limited knowledge base about agriculture (careers).

The students in Iowa were likely to recognize employment opportunities in agriculture from the industrial aspect for African-Americans. Of the twenty-one students participating only one student knew an African-American who owned an agricultural business that was not related to industrial work.

One would assume since the students from Iowa perceived agriculture as more industrial in its make-up for employment, that one would have to be educated (skilled) to work in the area. This is not the case. The few African-American students that knew someone working in the plants, in the area, were mainly semi-skilled workers. Both groups of students thought one could go into an agricultural career at anytime with little or no special training. Agriculture is perceived as a skill-less career (low tech, low skill, white male).

These students never thought about being a farmer, even though they see farming all day and perceive agriculture as farming. They state that they have only seen “white farmers” and they can not identify with that. Here is a

perfect example of what the students response was. "You don't see. You don't see any . . . they don't ever show on TV a Black farmer and his family on a farm." This point also stood out with the author. He also has never seen an African-American portrayed as a farmer in a television commercial.

The students from the south (Alabama) had a wider array of thoughts about agriculture to pull from. These students knew African-American farmers, they knew people who work in industry, extension, teaching and one or two had parents who owned agricultural companies. So the attitudes and responses of these students were drawn from a knowledge base that was a more positive one.

These students faced more problems with peers, parents making statements like smart students do not work in agriculture. The smart student would want to wear a suit and tie and sit at a desk all day. This peer/parent influence may have caused one of the students to make this comment. "My daddy works at McMillian Bloedel Company, but he wants me to get a job using my head." Or statements like "I can come back to agriculture anytime." They assumed that since they knew a lot of people in agriculture that it's easy to get a job in the field. And that the skill level required to do this job was not that great, just look at so and so. Here's an example. "My uncle said, he told me, work in a paper mill, it ain't something you just want to get into. He said the reason why he got in there was because he didn't have a good education and right then, it was all a black man could do."

Another distinction I would like to draw upon in response is the difference between the females and male answers. The females in these focus

groups seemed to be less responsive to the subject than the males. I can only recall one female participant who really responded, but on the male side I found several willing participants. I think this was due in large part to agriculture as being a male dominated activity and nontraditional career for women. The author hypothesizes that females see agriculture as physical, outside work, dirty and it's not feminine.

Parsons (1980) further reinforces the author's hypothesis about females in non-traditional roles with the following statement:

Who influences students' decisions to enroll in traditional and/or nontraditional programs? By the time children reach elementary school, they have already sensed the pressure to conform to society's expectations of sex-appropriate behavior and interests. Encouragement from parents to succeed in math, science, and technology is critical in a girl's decision to enroll in these courses.

Beck (1989) contended that the "greatest influence on anyone's (regardless of gender) career decision is the mother."

One of the female participants was very adamant in her responses. As an example. "I just think farmers aren't fairly treated. Their salaries--they deserve more for what they do." Another heartening response by this young lady was "My brother worked at IBP but quit after 3 days because it smelled so bad. He was um the one that killed the animals, cleaned it, cut it up. He said that he couldn't stand it, because it smelled bad and um . . . one day he was cutting up a cow and there was a female and inside there was a calf still alive and he had to kill it and so after that he just quit."

Drawing conclusions from personal experience, the few African-American women the authors has known to be in the agricultural career did

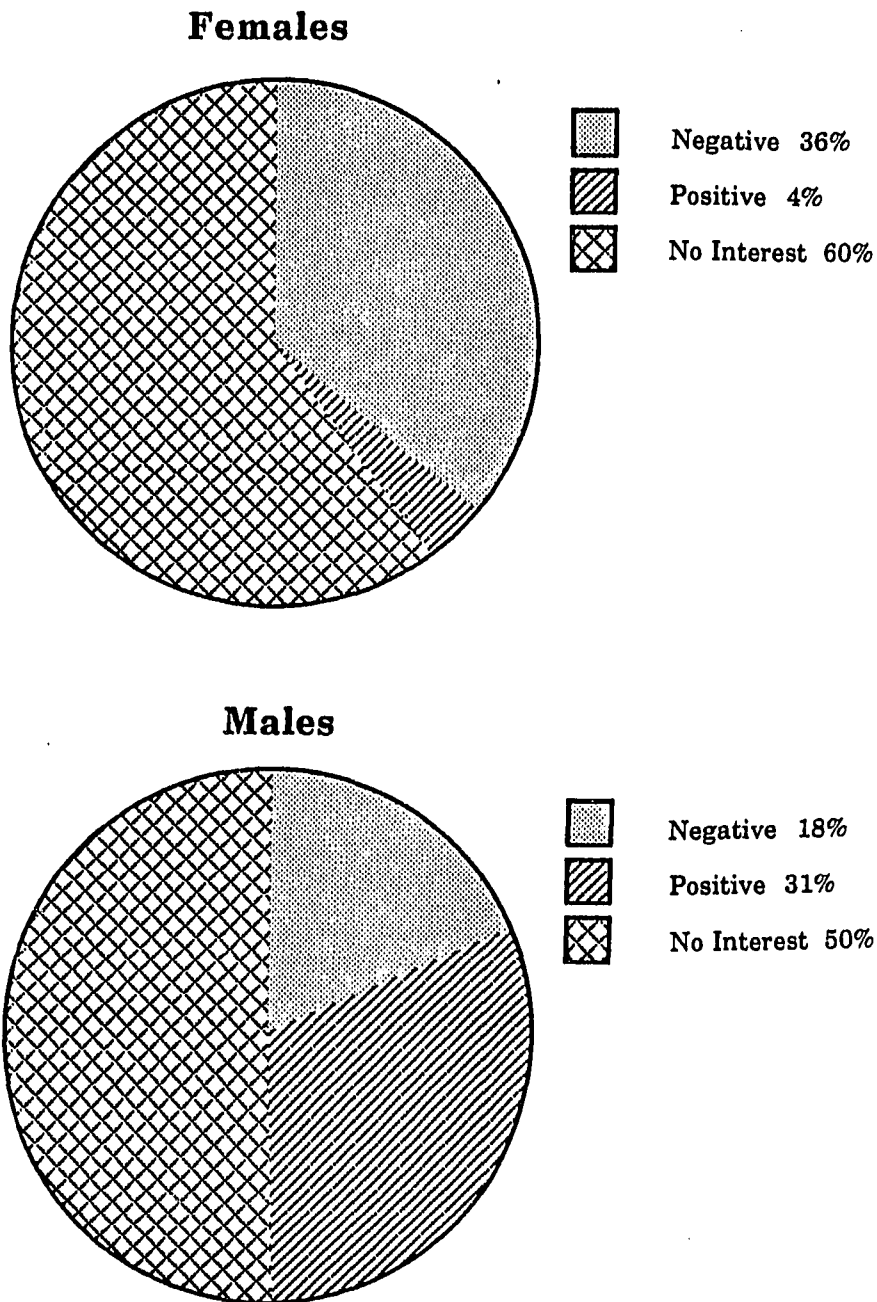


Figure 6. Comparison of female and male opinions, on pursuing a career in agriculture.

not originally start out in the field. They usually started out in the undergraduate major as pre-med students or biology. Upon arriving in graduate school they find support both financially and mentally in programs under the umbrella of the agricultural college.

Major Findings

The major findings of this study were:

- (1) Respondents from the south had more favorable perceptions about agriculture.
- (2) The media presented a negative image of agriculture to both groups of respondents.
- (3) The responding females had a more negative perception about careers in agriculture than did the male respondents.
- (4) The respondents in both groups held the same negative perceptions about agriculture as mainstream American students hold.
(Reisch, 1984).
- (5) Career awareness of these respondents was adversely affected by perceiving agriculture as little more than farming.
- (6) The responding females in Iowa were more talkative about the subject matter than the responding females in Alabama.
- (7) The respondents in both groups expressed concerns about career discussions encountered with counselors/teachers as being limited to non-existence.
- (8) Well over fifty-percent of these respondents expressed an interest in pursuing higher education.

Implications/Conclusions

Based on the findings of this research project, the following implications are offered to those responsible for providing information about modern agriculture and the careers available to students.

1. African-American high school students, from the north, viewed agriculture careers from an industry perspective. The African-American students from the south viewed agriculture from all phases (extension, teaching, farming, industrial work and stewardship) of its breadth. The colleges of agriculture in these states will have major information hurdles (concerning both the image of agriculture and the awareness of agricultural career potential) to overcome in order to be successful in recruiting these students.
2. The author senses in both groups an image of agriculture as being "farming" (low technology, backward, dirty, old, and white male). This observation is similar to that made by Bankston and Cano (1992) when studying the factors that influenced participation and nonparticipation of ethnic minority youth in Ohio 4-H programs.
3. Representatives from the university at large must understand the ramifications of not including all people at the academy. The WORKFORCE 2000 reports that 60% of all school children will be of African, Hispanic, Asian and indigenous decent by the year 2000.

Recommendations

Increased emphasis is being place on recruiting students from underrepresented ethnic groups into food and agricultural sciences programs. "In the past, career opportunities in agriculture have not emphasized the professional nature of agricultural careers and this may be needed in order that prospective students can evaluate agriculture along with other professional disciplines. We have not done a particularly good job in projecting the correct image of careers in agriculture. Career image has a significant impact on a student's decision. The image of careers in agriculture impacts our ability to recruit good students. High school students may be relatively unaware of the wide range of careers in agriculture. Many still associate careers in agriculture with farming--production agriculture (Beck, 1987)."

The land grant colleges and universities need to address the problem of recruiting high school students from underrepresented ethnic groups. Over fifty percent of both groups of respondents express interest in attending some form of higher education. But, only a small percentage of that number expressed interest in an agricultural major. The land-grant colleges and universities need to develop "feeder programs" (MAP) in respective states to tap these viable resources and increase agricultural literacy of the students.

The students in Iowa had fewer opportunities to identify with role models in the arena. This lack of role models may impede the students agriculture career decisions. The land grant university in Iowa needs to develop linkages with corporate America to improve on mentoring (shadowing) during MAP activities.

Both groups of respondents were agriculturally illiterate in being able to understand the breadth of agriculture (careers). The recruitment practices of the land-grants should use better packaging in an attempt to expose more of the processing careers in agriculture. The processing careers make up between eighty and ninety percent of all agricultural careers.

Once these students are recruited, retention programs must already be in existence in order for success. One part of a retention plan might involve the establishment of a local MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences) chapter.

Example: Developing a process designed to match upper class students (college juniors and seniors) with college freshmen and sophomores in a mentoring relationship.

The land-grant colleges and universities need to enlist the help of stated federal legislators to infuse agriculture into the curriculum from grades Kindergarten through twelve.

The universities and colleges should develop hiring practices that mirror the image of each states' population.

This study also left some questions unanswered and raised several additional questions, suggesting the following topics for additional research.

1. The study should be replicated with African-American high school students from urban areas.
2. The relationship between indigenous high school students and African-American high school students should be analyzed.
3. The male to female relationships should be examined closer.

4. Research should be done on adults for comparisons with the students.
5. Studies should be conducted to better understand the relationship between media coverage of agriculture and the perceptions and beliefs about agriculture held by African-American high school students.
6. A longitudinal study should be conducted to better understand how perceptions of agriculture change over time.

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The successful completion of this doctoral program would not have happened if it had not been for moral, physical, and financial support from my committee members. That committee consisted of Dr. Detroy Green (Associate Dean, Agriculture); Dr. Carolyn A. Prince (Horticulture), Dr. David L. Williams (Associate Dean, Education), and Dr. Julia Gamon (Agricultural Education).

I am very humbled by the caring attitude of my typist, Mrs. Sheryl Kamps, who worked long and hard to type this research.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this study to my mother "Sugar Brown" Doris Marie Brown. She didn't always understand how to raise a "Boy" when I was growing up. But, she gave me some great advice, "Boy, just ask God and be careful what you ask for, you might get it!"

THE ROAD HOME

Lord, is this the right road home?
The clouds are dark and still,
The stoney path so sharp and hard,
Each step brings some fresh hill
I thought the way would brighter grow

And that the sun with warmth would glow
And joyous songs from free hearts flow,
Tell me, Lord, is this the right road home?

Yes, child, this is the right road home!
The clouds were dark for me,
The stony path so sharp and hard,
Not sight, but faith could see
That at the end the sun shines bright,
Forever, where there is no night,
And glad hearts rest from earth's fierce fight,
Yes, child, this is the right road home!
... Anonymous

Special thanks are extended to Dr. Carolyn A. Prince and Dr. Barbara Woods for their mentorships.

APPENDIX A.

COVER LETTER AND
QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Student:

I am conducting a study to better understand your feelings toward the field of agriculture as a career option. Your participation in this focus group discussion will provide a profile on how agriculture and agriculture as a career in general is viewed by students such as yourself.

Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated for participating in this focus group discussion. The focus group will not last more than one hour. It is important that you respond in terms of your perceptions about agriculture. This information is for a research project and your name will not be used.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

Sidney L. Brown

1. What are some of the subjects you enjoyed in school? Why? Which do you like the least? Why?
2. What are your plans after you finish high school?
3. When you hear the word agriculture what comes to mind?
4. Do you think people have a bad image of people in agriculture? If so, tell me some of the bad images.
5. Does anyone in your family, community, church or friends work in agriculture (USDA, SCS, 4-H, florist, landscaping, drive trucks)?
6. What have they said to you about opportunities in agriculture? Are they satisfied with their jobs?
7. Some teachers talk about different career opportunities. Have your teachers or counselors mentioned agricultural careers? If so, what did they say?
8. Have you asked teachers or counselors about opportunities in agriculture? What was their response?
9. Are you considering a career in agriculture? Why? Why not?
10. What is it about agriculture that would make you want to work in the area?
11. What do you suggest we do to get young people like yourself to think about agriculture as a career? Improve the pay, working condition or your understanding of agriculture.
12. Do you have any final thoughts about agriculture as a field in which to work?

APPENDIX B.

FOLLOW-UP LETTER

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Department of Agricultural Education and Studies
201 Curtiss Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011-1050
Administration and Graduate Programs 515 294-5904
Research and Extension Programs 515 294-5872
Undergraduate Programs 515 294-6924

Dr. Daryl Spannes, Asst. Superintendent
Administration Building
1021 Harrison Street
Davenport, Iowa 52803

Dear Dr. Spannes:

I would like to thank all of the administrators and counselors of the Davenport School District who made my research project a success. It was successful because of your coordinating efforts with Mrs. Chris Hester.

I would also like to note that confidentiality is assured in this project. The students names will not be used.

Thank you again for your cooperation in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Sidney L. Brown
Minority Coordinator

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Department of Agricultural Education and Studies
201 Curtiss Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011-1050
Administration and Graduate Programs 515 294-5904
Research and Extension Programs 515 294-5872
Undergraduate Programs 515 294-6924

Dr. Arlester McBride, Superintendent
Wilcox County Board of Education
P.O. Box 160, Hwy 221
Camden, AL 36726

Dear Dr. McBride:

I would like to thank all of the administrators and counselors of the Wilcox School District who made my research project a success. It was successful because of your coordinating efforts with Mrs. Chris Hester.

I would also like to note that confidentiality is assured in this project. The students names will not be used.

Thank you again for your cooperation in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Sidney L. Brown
Minority Coordinator

APPENDIX C.

FOCUS GROUP DATA

Good morning and welcome to our session. My name is Sidney Brown and I am a graduate student in the Agricultural College at Iowa State University. Assisting me is _____, also from Iowa State. We are trying to gain information about Black students' perceptions toward agriculture as a career of choice.

You were selected because you have certain things in common that are of interest to us. We are interested in your views because you are representatives of others in the state.

Today we will be discussing your perceptions of careers in agriculture. There are not right or wrong answers but different points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said.

Before we begin, let me remind you of some ground rules. This is strictly a research project. There are no rules! Please speak up. Only one person should talk at a time. We're recording the session because we don't want to miss any of your comments. Remember, we can only sing together--not talk together. Respect each person. We will be on a first name basis only. On our later reports there will not be any names attached to comments. Our session will last about an hour, and we will not take a formal break.

Well, let's begin. We've placed name cards on the table in front of you to help us remember each other's name.

Davenport North/Females

- Sidney My name is Sidney Brown, I'm a graduate student in the college of agriculture at Iowa State University. Assisting me is Diana Mitchell, also from Iowa State. We're here today to gain information on Black student's perceptions toward agriculture as a career of choice. There are no right or wrong answers--only different points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view--even if it differs from what others have said. Before we begin, let me remind you of some ground rules. This is strictly a research project. There are no rules. Please speak up. Only one person should talk at a time. We're recording this session because we don't want to miss any of your comments. We will be on a first name basis only. On our later reports, there will not be any names attached to comments. Our session will last about an hour and we will not take a formal break. So let's begin. We've placed name cards in front of you so that we can remember each one of your names. Ok. My first question relates to some subjects that you take in high school that you enjoy the most. Can anybody tell me one --a course in high school they liked, like science or math or . . . Tara?
- Student Um. Mostly creative courses.
- Sidney Creative courses?
- Student Courses that are creative.
- Sidney Why do you like creative courses?
- Student Because the rules aren't so strict, like with math, there's only one right way. Other creative courses . . .
- Sidney How about you . . .
- Student I like speech. Because I like to speak out in front of everybody.
- Sidney How about you Cornola.
- Student I like English classes because it's fun and I get good grades in there. I do good papers and . . . and stuff.
- Sidney Jennifer?
- Student My favorite class is probably music, orchestra and band. I play the piano also.

- Sidney We had . . . you didn't tell me what courses you don't like.
- Student Science.
- Sidney And why don't you like science?
- Student Because it's boring. I don't understand half of the time.
- Sidney OK
- Student Speech. Because I get nervous when I'm talking in front of people, I shake.
- Sidney Oh, that's not bad. Everybody gets nervous. You know that right?
- Student
- Student Why do you get nervous? Is there a camera in the class? Or do they stare at you?
- Student They just, you know they're looking at you.
- Sidney So they look at you like you are looking at me? Trying to make you nervous? That's what they do? Huh?
- Student I guess, they just be looking at you some . . . or something.
- Sidney What course do you like the least and tell me why?
- Student Um. Probably geometry, but I like all my courses to a point. The only reason I don't like geometry probably is the atmosphere. The room's kind of cold. The people, you know, . . . is why I don't like it.
- Diana The room is cold--as in the temperature?
- Student No, I mean the atmosphere that you're around.
- Sidney Attitude of the teacher and the students.
- Sidney Now, the next question is--
- Diana Did Tara answer her least favorite subject?
- Sidney Uh hum. She said math is too strict for her. What are your plans after you finish high school? I mean, I wanted to go to the army when I graduated. I ain't going to school, so what are some of your plans when you graduate?

Student Yes. I want to go to college in Georgia and I want to take up law school or fashion designing.

Sidney Why law school? No. No. Don't do that. Why law school?

Student Because I like defending people.

Sidney Ok. You just said you were afraid of speaking. Why the state of Georgia?

Student I want to go to a black college. I don't know what college I want to go to, but I know I want to take up law. I like defending people too. possible, I'd like to go to a conservatory and maybe out East with music. If not that, maybe Indiana . . . some schools.

Diana Musical conservatory?

I want to go into Journalism maybe, and if that that doesn't really work out then college of business. And I was thinking of either black colleges or if that doesn't work out, some place around Iowa.

Sidney Next question. When you hear the word agriculture, what comes to your mind. Just tell me. Don't try to set it up. Just tell me everything that comes to your mind when you hear the word agriculture. We'll start with you Jenna.

Student Sand and dirt and dust. Not that there is anything with agriculture, I mean that's just what I think of you know like mountains and junk like that.

Diana Sand, dirt, dust and mountains.

Student Trees and grass--mud, sand.

Student John Deere and tractors.

Sidney Oh, John Deere. You like John Deere. They fascinate you. John Deere and the tractors or you just think about it.

Student No, that's what I think of when I think agriculture.

Sidney Do you have a bad image of people in agriculture. I mean, do you have, do you think they're dumb or do you think they are very intelligent? What do you think about people in agriculture. Anybody.

- Student I don't get it.
- Student Not really.
- Student I think that's their choice if they want to go into it.
- Sidney I mean, if they work with John Deere as an engineer. What do you think about people . . . are they, do they have bad images.
- Student No, as long as they like what they're doing. I mean that's as long as they enjoy it. That's what they want to be doing.
- Sidney I mean, but do people in the community have bad images of people in agriculture? Do they have bad images of farmers or
- Student No. Not a bad image, but sometimes they're not, they're not fairly treated.
- Sidney What do you mean by "fairly treated?"
- Student Well, like just certain laws. I don't know, it's harder for farmers I know, to get by on their salaries on what they make, but I think like if there's engineers involved in it, I know that takes a lot of training and skill. I respect that.
- Diana So are you saying that you do not respect a farmer because he hasn't been trained?
- Student No, I didn't say I didn't respect the farmer, I said I respect them, but , I don't have disrespect for them, I just think they aren't fairly treated--their salaries , they deserve more for what they do.
- Sidney OK, now, is there anyone in your family or your community or your friends working agriculture. Some examples might be in selling flowers, landscape design, driving trucks that haul livestock,
- Diana USDA who haul this meat to market.
- Student I have a friend that lives on a farm back in Walcott. Every now and then I visit her, but you know, really . . . her father's a farmer.
- Diana Does anyone else have any friends or family or know anybody that works in agriculture?
- Student I know some people that work in John Deere, but other than that, not really. I have a distant cousin--he hauls things, I don't know what he hauls.

- Diana Anybody else? Canola?
- Student My Grandpa owns a flower shop and my dad has his own company that hauls stuff . . . and things like that.
- Diana Your Grandfather is a florist?
- Student Uh huh.
- Diana What about you?
- Student My Grandma, she works at John Deere.
- Diana What does she do?
- Student Um, I think she helps make stuff, you know. The machines and everything.
- Sidney Yes, engineer assistant. Now, when you talk to your grandparents, what do they say about agriculture, the opportunities in agriculture, do they say there's a lot of opportunities to get into being a floral culturalist or work at John Deere, or
- Diana Do they like their jobs, are they happy?
- Sidney Are they satisfied with their jobs or do they always complain about working. What do they say about it?
- Student . . . she tells me it's a good job. She can make a lot of money, but it's tiring and hard work.
- Diana What about you Jenna? You say you have friends or parents of farmers?
- Student Yeah.
- Sidney What do they say about agriculture? Do they say it's good pay or they like farming?
- Student She really doesn't necessarily say that, because she helps out. Sometimes she'll mention like the problems they'll have in terms of money and things like that and how her father will travel you know, I guess, I don't know, maybe it's an organization for farmers, I'm not sure, things like that that she mentions, but she doesn't really comment on whether it's good or bad.

- Sidney But do they seem to enjoy the lifestyle the way they live,
- Student That's all she knows. She likes it. She's used to it. She's content as far as I know.
- Student They don't really say anything. Well, the person I knew that worked at John Deere is like a friend of my father's. He doesn't really talk about his job. I know he works long hours, though. I've always heard that there's good opportunities in that field.
- Sidney ... What does your grandfather say--does he say anything positive? He's still in the business--I know he must like it.
- Student Yeah--he say he like doing it--working with flowers, but he say he don't do nothing he don't want to do or don't like.
- Sidney Some teachers talk about different career opportunities. Have your teachers or counselors mentioned agriculture careers? Any of your teachers ever say anything?
- Diana Think back now.
- Student Not teachers--counselors have I think. Our MIT program or something like that.
- Sidney What do they say?
- Student I don't know--we went to lectures or sessions that talked about agriculture and told us that there were opportunities in it.
- Diana Remember who did the sessions?
- Student No, it was awhile ago--couple of years ago. I think it was somebody from University of Iowa.
- Diana Was that your 9th grade year?
- Student Yeah, 8th or 9th. It was through MIT--Minorities in Teaching Program.
- Sidney Have any of you asked your teachers or counselors about opportunities in agriculture? Since you know people who live on farms or work in agriculture, here you asked anybody--counselors or teachers--why haven't you asked? Just never thought about it?

- Student I know--or at least I think I know what I want to do, except I ... agriculture I don't think that's what I want to do--therefore I haven't asked.
- Student That's about the same with me. I'm thinking of going into Journalism so that never really crossed my mind to ask about agriculture.
- Sidney The next question is . . . Are you considering a career in agriculture? I guess I'll start with Jennifer.
- Student No.
- Sidney And why not? Just tell me again.
- Student I think I want to go into music.
- Sidney Tell me. Why. Any special reason why not?
- Student Not really, no. Just I want to ... No. I just want to go into law.
- Student No--I've been looking into Journalism.
- Sidney What is it about agriculture that will make you work in the area? (Name?)
- Student I'm not sure.
- Sidney Any reason why you are not sure? What do you mean by not sure?
- Student Agriculture is trees and grass. I really don't know much about agriculture so I really don't know what to say on it. I don't know because I don't know nothing about .
- Sidney That's good.
- Diana You lived here all your life?
- Sidney You see corn fields everyday don't you?
- Student Uh huh.
- Sidney You see people going to John Deere every day?
- Diana . . . What agriculture is all about. Don't you find that amazing?

- Student Well they don't really, I mean. Like when you're in elementary school they might take you to a farm or something, but other than that, you just drive by the corn fields and you see corn or you see soybeans or whatever ... you don't know.
- Student Question maybe, but when you talked about different areas where I could do Journalism in agriculture, I mean if there was some area of agriculture where I could be happy and I could do what I wanted and enjoy doing.
- Sidney What do you think Jenna?
- Student I agree with her statement. I don't know much about it, but I know it's nothing I want to go into. If I knew more about it I could probably figure out—find something that I enjoy.
- Sidney My next question is: What do you suggest we do to get young people to think about agriculture as a career? Do we need to improve the working conditions? I know you said your grandmother said it had good pay? So what do you think we need to improve about agriculture to get young people, young black people students to get interested in agriculture?
- Student A few of the things that you've said, she told me different things about it. I mean, you have to kind of change the image of agriculture, because a lot of people I think of it as just dirt, trees, and grass and stuff. I mean, if the image was changed and people knew more about it, then maybe more people would be interested. Because there are a lot of areas that you mentioned that I know a lot of people that want to go into those areas.
- Student Education. Educating the young people about agriculture. I think everything will happen on its own.
- Sidney So what can we do to get our young people to get into agriculture?
- Student I think they should teach them more in MIT and all that kind of stuff because we don't even meet half of the time and talk about nothing. We just meet and hand out a paper and then that's it.
- Diana Do any of you have agriculture teachers at your school?
- Student No. As far as I know. No.
- Student Maybe.
- Sidney What do you think ?

- Student I think they should teach more, have classes every so often and put more into textbooks about it. ... tell us about what happened in the war and all that stuff and have more about Black history and stuff and teaching us more about ...
- Sidney All right, every time we go to a different school I always hear somebody say something about agriculture and Black people. What do you know about that? You all got a feeling, don't you?
- Diana Why do you all think we ... agriculture? What do you all think that we don't go into agriculture?
- Student Maybe it's like flashbacks to the plantation.
- Sidney I like that.
- Student Stereotypes, you know.
- Student You know, lots of stereotypes go along with groups of people—groups of this group or that. You automatically get a general picture in your head from what we've been taught. You know, when I think of agriculture, the first thing I think of is a Black man or a Black woman. I didn't think of grass and dirt, you know. It is just the impression that I get and education could change that.
- Diana So the stereotypes of agriculture.
- Student Seems like Black people have been trying to get ahead and they're not thinking about going into agriculture, they're trying to get more ahead in corporate America or whatever than they are with agriculture.
- Sidney Do you have any final thoughts about agriculture as a field in which to work? I know, when we started, everybody had negative thoughts--just dirt and plants, and trees, and sand ... do you have any final thoughts, anything positive or comments? Let's start with Jennifer and go around.
- Student It's starting to look a little bit better. I mean, it just, it makes more sense now. You know, everything is kind of falling into place. I can, where everything, if you think about it--you know, it just makes sense.
- Sidney What do you mean, everything just falls into place? Explain it for me. I understand what you are saying, but when my professor "what does she mean?"

- Student Like agriculture, you know, it's a part of our lives, you know, a lot. Like the water you drink, the clothes we are wearing, everything, almost everything we do has to deal with agriculture, not just sand and trees, especially.
- Diana What about you ?
- Student Well, what made me start thinking that I won't have to major in law or fashion design, I can start getting into some agriculture things that I would enjoy, ok he said about florist shops and stuff and don't just sit to the side, because I still might want to look up into some of the things he was talking about.
- Student Yeah. Now I understand about it first. Yeah, I'm thinking about it. I like it so far. I'm going to try. Forget about law. I'm not going to forget it, but if I can't do it, then I'm going to try to do some agriculture.
- Student It's something to think about now. I mean, I haven't really been positive, absolutely, on what I want to do and it's something to consider now.
- Diana You say, your teachers or counselors really hadn't said anything to you about agriculture or education? Well, you need to go and ask ... I don't know, you said they didn't say anything, but did you all ask? You all need to go to them, especially counselors. That's why they are there to help you. "Miss so and so, I was wondering if you have any information on careers in agriculture? If you don't, could you find someone for me? I'm interested. Can you help me? Can you do this?" they are there to help you, and if they don't help you, I'm sure--call, they 1-800 and call the department and they will send you the information on agriculture.
- Sidney We want to thank you all for coming out and being so patient in listening to me. Than you again.

Davenport North/Males

- Sidney My name is Sidney Brown and I'm a graduate student in the agricultural college of Iowa State University. Assisting me is Diana Mitchell, from Iowa State. We're trying to get enough information about Black students' perception to an agriculture as a career of choice. You were selected because you have certain things in common that are of interest to us. We are interested in your views because you are representatives of . . . states in the country. Today, we will be discussing your perceptions of careers in agriculture. There are no right or wrong answers, but different points of views. Please feel free to share your point of view, even if it differs from what we've said. Before we begin, let me remind you of some of the ground rules. This is strictly a research project. There are no rules. Please speak up. Only one person should speak at a time. We recorded the session because we do not want to miss any of your comments. Remember, we can always sing together--not talk together. Respect each person. We will be on a first name basis only and on our later reports, there will not be any names attached to the comments. Our session will last about an hour and we will not take a formal break. Now let us begin. We've placed name tags on the table to help us remember your name. And we ask you to speak up. We'll begin with our first question. What are some of the subjects in high school that you enjoy the most? That you take and tell me why you like them? Anybody, we can start with anybody. Tell me why you like them. James. You seem like you are ready to go.
- Student Biology, because I learn stuff that I don't know already. They teach you stuff that other classes wouldn't.
- Student Probably geometry.
- Sidney Can you tell me why you like geometry?
- Student Because I like working with numbers.
- Student Probably my history classes because it's always important for you to know, learn history so you won't make mistakes.
- Diana Are you learning your history in your history classes?
- Student I'm trying to learn. I'm not learning all of it, but I'm learning.
- Sidney All right, Giovianni.

- Student Probably geometry because the teacher don't take us through everything, he just gives us our assignment and we are on our own and I like to be on my own.
- Sidney Sounds good. Tell me some courses you like the least and tell me why you don't like those courses.
- Diana James?
- Student English, because we read stories and really don't get nothing out of them.
- Diana Is it boring?
- Student Yes. It's boring.
- Diana Do you think reading is boring?
- Student Well the stories that we read in there are boring.
- Sidney What are some of the stories you read?
- Student
- Sidney You were trying to tell me the last story you read.
- Diana That was boring.
- Student We read the Great Expectations. All it really talked about was how a boy shouldn't act towards his parents and stuff like that.
- Sidney How about Gioianni?
- Student Probably Media Experience, because we watch movies and learn about film and stuff and I don't see how that would relate to the career that I'm interested in.
- Sidney What career is that?
- Student Mechanical or Civil Engineering.
- Diana Media Experiences. What did you tell me that you do in there again?
- Student It's like learning about movies, commercials, TV, radio.
- Diana Lawrence.

- Student Probably be my science classes. Basically because they don't interest me.
- Diana Lawrence, did you just tell me that your most enjoyable subject was biology?
- Student No. Basically because it just doesn't interest me. I don't see how later on in life it's going to help me.
- Diana Basic science, Biology.
- Student Advanced Sciences.
- Student Science because I just don't like it. It's boring.
- Sidney After you finish high school, what do you plan on doing? I know when I finished high school, I wanted to go to the military. What do you plan on doing when you finish?
- Diana Give them a couple seconds to think about this one. Ok. Lawrence, go ahead.
- Student Um. I'm going to UNI. Playing football for them and going into law enforcement.
- Diana You said something about football? You gonna play football? Why you gonna play football?
- Student It's just something I've basically done since I was a little kid and part of the reason is that's paying my way to school.
- Diana So you're getting a scholarship for football? What are you going to major in?
- Student Law enforcement.
- Diana Law enforcement. Just would you think about something? If you're going to play football, football starts in August, right? And it's over in like November? What if at the end of September, beginning of October, you happen to break your leg? UNI snatches your scholarship? How are you going to pay for your tuition?
- Student I'd probably have to go through financial aid. My parents are saving money, but if I get this scholarship, more than likely I will, I plan on getting a car with that, but if I end up spending my money

on a car, I probably would have to go through financial aid, student loan or something.

Diana Just wanted you to think about it.

Sidney Giovianni.

Student After I get out of high school, I plan on going to Iowa State University. Because they do have a good engineering program and that's what I want to do. But as far as scholarships or anything, I don't know right now ... academic scholarship.

Diana Alright. Cory. Kind of quiet down there on the end.

Student I plan on going to college, but really I didn't know what I'm gonna be yet.

Diana What kind of college? A two year college or a four-year college, a technical college, a business college, an agriculture college? What kind of college? Beauty school?

Student I don't know.

Diana But you know you will be going to college?

Sidney James

Student Well, I plan on going to college--major in some type of engineering. I don't know yet.

Sidney This next question is a real good question. When you hear the word "agriculture", what comes to your mind? What just popped into your mind when I said "agriculture?"

Student Animals, and farms.

Student Animals.

Diana What kind of animals?

Student Cows

Student I think of India.

Sidney Can you tell me why Indians? Why would you . . .

Student Not Indians, India.

- Sidney Why India?
- Diana The country?
- Student I don't know. It just . . . first of all, I'm not sure what agriculture is really. So that's just, when I hear the word, that's just the first thing that pops up in my mind.
- Sidney Have you read anything about India that would make you think about India? Have you read about anybody or anything in History?
- Student No.
- Sidney What about you Cory?
- Student Farms, farm animals.
- Sidney Do you have a bad image of people in agriculture? I mean, now to define agriculture a little bit for you, you tell my people that work with 4H? Have you ever heard of the Extension Service, 4H youth development, people work at John Deere Tractor, people that work with Extension Service, people work with soil conservationists, florists, landscape design?
- Diana The people that transfer the pigs from one site to another.
- Sidney Drive transfer trucks and haul livestock? That's what you call people that farm, so under that definition, do you think people have bad images of those people, or do you have bad images of the people that work in that area? Do you have any images of them at all? You never even thought about those people who drive transfer trucks what they're hauling? Or you've never thought about ...
- Diana Never thought about the food on your table? Someone is growing it somewhere. What about that cotton shirt? Have you ever thought about that?
- Sidney You don't think about agriculture?
- Student It's nothing you stop and think about.
- Student My uncle works for John Deere and he makes tractors and that has something to do with agriculture doesn't it?
- Sidney Uh huh.

- Diana What kind of image do you have of your uncle?
- Student He's a good man. He retired and he's getting a lot of money with our working, so ...
- Diana John Deere must have good benefits or some kind of pension plan that was suitable to him. James, did we ask you? How do you feel about people in agriculture?
- Sidney Do you have a bad image or do you have a good image or you just never even ...
- Student I've never really thought about it.
- Sidney How about you Cory?
- Student I never thought about it either.
- Sidney Does anyone in your family, church friends, or anybody that you know that works in agriculture? I mean anybody--USDA, anybody who drives trucks, people that work at John Deere?
- Student Pretty much all of my family.
- Diana Your whole family works somewhat in agriculture? You told me you never really thought about agriculture?
- Sidney After I defined it.
- Student I'm not too sure what it means so, now I guess I am since you have somewhat defined it for me.
- Diana So you said that your family works in some type of agriculture? And what do they do?
- Student John Deere, . . . is teaching considered? they're teaching elementary
- Sidney That could be a part of 4H, yeah.
- Diana James, anybody you know?
- Student I think one of my uncles works at John Deere.
- Diana Do you know what he does?
- Student No.

- Sidney Cory?
- Student My grandfather, he works at Case IH. He makes tractors...
- Diana What was the name of that place?
- Student Case IH
- Sidney Our next question. What do the people that you know that work in agriculture, are they satisfied with those jobs?
- Student He said he's glad he went into it and he's glad he's out of there.
- Diana Why does he say he's glad to get out of it?
- Student Because, a lot of hard work. My grandmother used to work at International Harvester too.
- Diana What did she do?
- Student She was working with the machines and stuff like that, but she ...
- Diana She had to quit because of her legs? Was she standing all day?
- Student She had a problem with her ankles, she had to have surgery. But she said she liked it.
- Diana Think she was glad to get out too like your uncle? Anybody else?
- Sidney Anybody say anything good, bad, or anything about their jobs? Do they seem to have a good quality of life? Do they have a good home? Cars?
- Student Well, they tell me all the time there's food on the table, basically. The benefits are good or what not and some of them, you know, they went to college and that's their career and they just love doing it. Doing those certain things. I guess they are pretty much satisfied with what they're doing.
- Diana You said they went through college.
- Student Well, like my aunt. they had to go to college for teaching and everything.
- Sidney What does your uncle say about it Cory?

Student

Sidney You said your grandfather worked at International? You remember him saying anything? Does he seem like he is happy or is ...

Student He really never talks about it.

Diana How about you James?

Student Well, he just said that it pays good.

Sidney Some teachers talk about different career opportunities. Have your teachers or counselors mentioned agricultural careers? If so, what did they say?

Student I just head him say "agriculture." That you can work in the field of agriculture when you get older, but they never really said anything ...

Sidney Who is "they?"

Student My teachers.

Sidney Ok.

Diana What about you Mark, you're a senior. ...

Student You guys talking about having mentioned the work (?or word?) "agriculture"

Sidney

Diana No, just anything that gets discussed, like landscaping, they might say, "Well you ought to want to work for your dad and organize his business and make a million dollars.

Student Well, I have heard that before, as far as ...

Diana Who have you heard that from?

Student Well, a lot of ...

Diana Besides family?

- Student A lot of them happen to be Black teachers, you know. Telling me, you know, that's an easy job ... going to your ... So I should go into landscaping.
- Sidney Have you asked your teachers or counselors about opportunities in Ag? What was their response? Any of you ever ask your teachers about opportunities.
- Diana They never told you, so you never asked? Right?
- Student Seem to be one of the left out careers as far as what they tell you. As far as what you want to do with your life. Doesn't seem to come in there much. It seems like they skip over ...
- Diana They, they teachers and the counselors?
- Student I've never really heard any teachers say "like you are saying right now, like agriculture ..."
- Diana What about you Cory? Do you ever ask any of your teachers around?
- Student No, never ask them because when I think of agriculture, I think of farming . . . Dirt, sand, and mud, and farms, and animals and all that is not for me.
- Sidney Alright, next question. Are you considering now since we discussed careers in agriculture. Are you considering a career in agriculture? If so, why. If not, why.
- Student Got me thinking bout them a little bit, so I guess I was, I am. But then again, you have so many choices out there.
- Sidney What do you think about it Giovianni?
- Student It's a good occupation, but I'm really stuck on mechanical or civil engineering because I like working with the things that has to deal with as far as the math and things like that.
- Sidney What is it about agriculture that will make you want to work in the area?
- Student Money
- Sidney What do you mean about money?
- Student Well, you said they make a lot of money. That would make me want to go in the area. And Math, I like Math.

- Diana Maybe we have to eat, right? Somebody has to help supply the food for us. These farmers say, "Hey, we don't want to farm anymore. What are we going to do?"
- Student Money, if it's something I like to do, of course I'm going to do it, you know. Basically, I said if it's something I like to do, I'm going.
- Diana Do you think it's something you want to do?
- Student That's only for me to find out.
- Student If I would be considering being in agriculture it probably would be because of the money and there's a wide variety of jobs besides working on a farm or something like that. There's a lot of different things that are connected with it.
- Diana You'll always have a job. You'll always be employed.
- Sidney Now, tell me, what do you suggest that we do to get young Black kids to start thinking about agriculture as a career? What do you think we need to do?
- Diana What can be done?
- Sidney Things like this? Like what?
- Student Like explaining to us what it really is. Not like 4 of us, like having some kind of assembly or something. I mean they have like a
- Diana A forum or seminar?
- Student Yeah, basically. Like over the summer they have a summer programs where they get all the kids together and they take them to a college and tell them about different careers or what not. If you ever something like that happening, maybe show them a seminar on that.
- Diana ... The Department of Business says, "Hey we want you." But not in agriculture.
- Sidney What do you think James?
- Student What was the question?
- Sidney What can we do to get young people like yourself to think about agriculture as a career?

- Student Well, explain to them what it is. Like Lawrence said, what you are doing now.
- Student Because there are a lot of Blacks that don't know what it means.
- Diana Been in Iowa all their lives. Doesn't that make you think a little bit?
- Student They don't know what it is and it's a long word. So they're scared of it right away. I don't want to get into that, that sounds like hard work.
- Diana That's a good point. What about you Cory? What can we do? To make you more aware of agriculture.
- Student Like he said, have seminars. You could even have classes in school you could take.
- Sidney You don't have an ag teacher here at school?
- Student Ag. Education.
- Sidney Yeah, ag education. Agriculture.
- Student Oh, no, I thought you said ...
- Student ... Aete
- Diana What is that?
- Student It's like for advanced students ... the really smart students.
- Diana No agriculture teacher here, huh?
- Sidney Our final question is, do you have any final thoughts. What can we do? Do you have any final thoughts about what we did today? Do you have any final thoughts or comments about agriculture?
- Diana Anything we said or anything anybody commented on? or
- Student I think that it was a good experience and now that we know about what it is and ... it's something we can think about and maybe share with other people.
- Diana ... Lawrence, have you all been accepted?
- Student I sent my application out. Waiting. I sent it out like last week.

Diana James

Sidney We want to thank you all for coming out today and really appreciate
your ...

2nd group/Wilcox Boys

- Sidney Good morning, and welcome to our session. My name is Sidney Brown and I'm a graduate student in the Agricultural College at Iowa State University. Assisting me is Sheila Brown, also from Iowa State. We are trying to gain information about Black students' perceptions toward agriculture as a career of choice. You were selected because you have certain things in common that are of interest to us. We are interested in your views because you are representatives of others in this state. Today, we will be discussing your perceptions of careers in agriculture. There are no right or wrong answers, but different points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view. Even if it differs from others. Even if it differs from others. Even if it differs from what others have said. Before we begin, let me remind you of some ground rules. This is strictly a research project. There are no rules. Please speak up. Only one person should talk at a time. We're recording this session because we don't want to miss any of your comments. Remember, we can only sing together, not talk together. Respect each person. We will be on a first name basis only. On our later reports, there will not be any names attached to comments. Our session will last about an hour and we will not take a formal break. So, let's begin. What are some of the subjects in school that you enjoy the most and tell me why. What are some of the classes you take that in high school that you enjoy the most? Michael?
- Student The classes that I enjoy the most is vocation.
- Sidney Vocation what?
- Student Autobody.
- Sidney Autobody. Why do you like that?
- Student Cause it's. That's what I like to do.
- Sidney You like to do what?
- Student Work on them.
- Sidney Work with your hands?
- Student Yeah.
- Sidney Lester

- Student My favorite class is autobody too. I enjoy working on cars--the challenge of different cars they say will not be able to be fixed.
- Sidney How about you, Nick?
- Student My favorite class is computers. I like using my hands. I like programming and I also like to draw charts and stuff.
- Sidney Dave?
- Student My favorite class is vocational ag, because I like working in the shop and ...
- Sidney Jonathan?
- Student I like art because I'm free to express myself on paper.
- Sidney Joseph?
- Student I like vocational ag because in vocational ag I like to learn to, how to build different projects, working on different projects, and learning about livestock, farming.
- Sidney Tell me, which are some of the classes you like least and then tell me why. Which subjects you don't like at all and then tell me why. Anybody. Just start.
- Student Mathematics.
- Sidney Why you all
- Student Doing all that algebra, geometry and all that.
- Sidney Anybody else?
- Student English.
- Sidney Tell about it ...
- Student Sometimes there are words I can hardly pronounce and sometimes getting confused with other words.
- Sidney Anybody else?
- Student English. Like doing a lot of research papers and stuff because we have an instructor that is kind of hard and she . . . understand things we haven't had yet.

Sidney Jonathan.

Student Science because it has nothing to do really basically with Black history and I love Black history.

Student My least subject is choir. I don't like to sing.

Student Mathematics, in which I'm pretty good at but, it really, to me it don't really have nothing to do with school you know. It really don't have too much to do with school to me, because all I really need to know is how to add and subtract and multiply and divide.

Sidney Alright, our next question is: What are your plans after you finish high school? What do you all want to do after you finish up? Do you want to go to the army? Do you want to go to college? Do you want to go to junior college? What you going to do?

Student Um, after I graduate, attend Albany State in Albany, Georgia. If I get a scholarship in football.

Student After high school I plan on attending a four year college. I haven't decided what I'm going to major in yet, but

Student I'm thinking about going into the marines.

Student I want to go to college and play football, but I don't know what's going to happen after I get out of school.

Student I plan on attending a four year college and . . . planning to play football on a four-year scholarship. My major, I'll major in English.

Sidney Michael

Student To attend a four-year college and major in criminal justice.

Sidney Ok. Next question. When you hear the word "agriculture," what's the first thing that pops into your head? When I say "agriculture" you say what?

Student Farming

Sidney Everybody. All right, do you think people have a bad image of people in agriculture? Do you think society as a whole when you maybe say you ask your granddaddy he had a bad image of somebody that works in agriculture?

- Student No.
- Sidney He didn't do it in school . . . So you all think that anybody has a bad image of society as a whole?
- Student No. Smart kids.
- Sidney What about the smart kids?
- Student You know they are the upper classmen, they can't get their hands dirty. They don't want to be there--I can't do that. I'm going to go into architecture, whatever, criminal justice and just sit in my suit all day and reading that book. Something like that.
- Sidney Does anyone in your family or community, church, any friends you know of work in agriculture? Even though you got 4H, you know that 4-H person, you got an ag man down at the shop your granddaddy might have a garden, you might know somebody that works in a florist shop over there on the bypass. You might have somebody driving them log trucks--that's agriculture.
- Student My uncle. He drives log trucks. My dad drives trucks, my grandpa . . . every year that they plant corn and grow. My mother plant a garden, I help her work in it. Grow everything. . . . in my neighborhood have a garden.
- Student My dad work on a farm. You know, he plant corn, cotton and all of that stuff.
- Sidney Is it his farm? Whose farm is he working on?
- Student No, he sort of like, you know--it's a Black man farm, but ...
- Sidney He does that full time?
- Student Yeah, full time.
- Sidney Ok. That's good. Jonathan, you know?
- Student . . . works in a ? mill.
- Sidney What type of mill?
- Student Alabama River Pulp Company.

- Student My grandparents, they always have a farm, ever since I was coming up, they have livestock, you know, hogs and they plant corn every year, you know--big farm. Well, my father drives a log truck and I have an uncle that working at MacMillan Bloedel
- Sidney That's the paper company?
- Student Yeah.
- Sidney How about you Michael?
- Student I have an uncle and a stepfather that works with MacMillan Bloedel
- Sidney Now, what do they say--has any of them said anything about opportunities in agriculture, like good jobs, or what are they saying? Does anybody say they are satisfied with their job or opportunities, ?
- Student My stepfather and uncle say that financially it is a good thing to take up, because MacMillan will hire some people in a year or so and they pay good and well . . . are needed all around the world.
- Sidney Nate?
- Student My father say that it is a good job. Of course it is a good job--working with wood, but instead, he wants me to aim higher and get a better job. I still like going . . .
- Sidney Alright, where are we at? What have they said about the agriculture opportunities? Are they satisfied with their jobs . . .
- Student He said, you know, a garden, like you know, ... learn how to plant stuff like collard greens, okra, and all the peas, and learn how to support your family.
- Sidney He thought that was important? Ok, Jonathan, what do you think? Tell what you heard about it.
- Student My uncle said, he told me, work in a paper mill, it ain't something you just want to get into. He said the reason why he got in there because he didn't have a good education, and right then, it was all open to a black man. He told me to go to school and get a good education set my goals real high, they ...
- Sidney Joseph?

- Student My grandparents, like I said, they always farm and basically, I'm glad that they know that I have been around to learn something about farming, because in years to come, by planting more food, like vegetables and stuff like that, that the food that they are producing, putting on the market these days is really causing them cancer and everything like that.
- Sidney What do you know about that cancer? Tell me more about that cancer--what they put in it to make people get cancer, since you got ... Put too much fertilizer?
- Student Chemicals. They plant stuff and put toxic waste in the earth and its going through the soil and its messing up the food. It grow good, it looks good, but in the years to come, it's going to hurt you.
- Student It just only making it bigger.
- Sidney What do you think? Michael. What do they say about working in agriculture or the job they have?
- Student
- Sidney You never asked them? Alright. The next thing is a, some teachers talk about different career opportunities. You know they say about different jobs and what to major in. Have your teachers or counselors mentioned a career in agriculture at all? Any of the counselors or teachers say, "?"
- Student My computer teacher, Mrs. ? , and my ag teacher, ? , trying to get me into A & M and Mr. ? is trying to get me into Auburn, agribusiness.
- Sidney Ok. Nate? Anybody?
- Student I have that new vocational lady. She told me she was going to talk to this teacher, somebody in Albany State about agriculture stuff with me.
- Student Mrs. ? tried to get me into ?
- Student Mr. Curry tried to talk to me about brick mason. Said they gonna need alot of those in the years to come.
- Student My vocational agriculture teacher, Mr. Goseman, he talking to me alot about going into agribusiness, you know, like being an ag teacher, ...

- Sidney How about you?
- Student I don't have any.
- Sidney Any counselor or teacher ever talk about ...
- Student Nothing.
- Sidney Ok. Next question would be--Are you considering a career in agriculture? Anybody considering majoring in agriculture, if so, why or why not?
- Student Yeah, I'm planning on, I'm thinking about going into agriculture because I like landscaping and working with flowers and everything. I like ? the trees and trying different ways how to protect them from all the different disease that get into the shrubs. I like doing that, so that's a big possibility for me in going into agriculture.
- Student I'm thinking about it since you came and talked to us about it. You know, I would have never thought of it.
- Sidney That's good. Jonathan?
- Student I'm thinking like ?
- Sidney Ok, that's good.
- Student Only problem is, you don't work in the winter, and I want to make money all year round.
- Sidney Right, that's why I'm here, we're discussing this and I'm doing my research and all that kind of stuff, and while I'm doing my research, I'm teaching you at the same time so you know about additional opportunities.
- Student Right now, I'm thinking about . . . If I don't get into Albany State ? to play football, most likely I'll be going to A & M for ?????
- Sidney Alright, Mike?
- Student Yeah, I'm going . . .
- Student Basically, I want to go into business for myself. You know, even though I'm thinking about majoring in English, you know, but that's something I really want to fall back into--agribusiness in the later years to come, you know.

- Sidney What is it about agriculture that will make you want to work in the area? Is there anything about agriculture that might make you want to work in the area--might want to change some or you just want to work in it for whatever? Is there anything in agriculture that would make you want to work in the area? Mike? Anything? Joseph?
- Student Basically, I like forestry, I want to work there because its something I grew up around.
- Sidney Ok. I'm glad you do that.
- Student Yeah, its something I like to do. I will keep on doing too.
- Student I like to work around ag and I like, you know, to make a better way for the . . . and stuff what we have.
- Sidney Now, we're on question #11. We've got one more to go. And it's a good question right here. What do you suggest we do to get young people like yourself, you know, like everybody in the school, or whatever, young people, to start thinking about careers in agriculture. What do you all think we need to do, because I know John or somebody said that the smart kids are the kids that so much don't want to major in agriculture. Tell me what you think we could do, Jonathan, and anybody else, of course, to try to get them kids to be interested in agriculture and let them know about all the opportunities and stuff like that.
- Student Basically, you should get more Black people that graduated from here and have been out there and got those good jobs and to come back and talk to us and show us what they did and achieved.
- Student Get more people like you to come around and talk to us.
- Sidney Nate, what do you think?
- Student I say about the same thing—get more people to come by who've been in the field and come in and talk to them.
- Sidney Joseph?
- Student Really, start out early with the younger generation in the lower schools. Lower grades.
- Sidney Ok. Michael?

- Student Have alot of agriculture activities and programs.
- Sidney Activities like what? . . .
- Student Like . . .
- Student I think that, well at least know our school has a larger need for a bigger classroom, because alot of students want to take it, cannot take it because we don't have enough room for them in the class.
- Sidney Alright, our last question will be: Do you all know all this we talked today about agriculture, now when we first came in you might not really think about agriculture. Do you have any final thoughts that you want to tell me about agriculture, in a field in which to work? Have I changed your mind about some of the things, or do you think agriculture is a job you want to do--or some in agriculture or you came here with a negative attitude. Do you think you might try to get in or do you think you are going to stay out and do like your granddaddy? Nathan, tell us.
- Student After I came in, I was not really thinking about agriculture. I kind of like business, some kind of business, but now that you brought it up, I feel pretty good about going into agriculture. I might be able to make it. I think I could make it Some I'm going to try out for landscape or the Forestry ??????
- Sidney Dave?
- Student Since you talked to me, I guess . . . you said money isn't everything.
- Student When I first came in here, I was thinking about agriculture as another subject major in college, but now I really think that I'll major in it in the end.
- Sidney Mike?
- Student I think I don't want to major in it because I don't want to be sitting around the house all the time--I want to have a job.
- Sidney Joseph?
- Student I want to, well, since you've talked to us, I really . . . a lot about maybe majoring in English because, you're right, agriculture is where the money is, because, you know, some people are not guaranteed jobs after college--you know, 4 years, they're always looking for people after 4 years of school. They're always looking . . .

Sidney John?

Student Well, since you came here I wasn't really thinking about agriculture. I didn't really want to get into it essentially. But when you came in and told us about the money and stuff we could make, that kind of it lead me toward that direction, but I really haven't decided what I really want to do in life, you know.

Sidney I want to thank you all for coming out today and I appreciate you all for taking time out of your busy schedule to sit down and talk with me.

1st group/Wilcox Girls

Sidney and I'm a graduate student in agriculture in the Agriculture College at Iowa State University. Assisting me also from Iowa State is Sheila Brown, my wife. We are trying to gain information about Black student perceptions toward agriculture as a career of choice. You were selected because you have certain things in common that are of interest to us. We are interested in your views because you are representatives of others in this state. Today, we will be discussing your perceptions of careers in agriculture. There are no right or wrong answers, but different points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view--even if it differs from someone else's. Before we begin, let me remind you of some ground rules. This is strictly a research project. There are no rules. Please speak up. Only one person should talk at a time. We are recording this session because we don't want to miss any of your comments. Remember, we can only sing together, not talk together. Respect each person. We will be on a first name basis only. On our later report, there will not be any names attached to comments. Our session will last about an hour, and will not take a formal break. Let's begin. We placed name cards out here, so let's get started. The first question this morning is: What are some of the subjects in school that you like the most? What are some subjects that you're taking in ninth, 11th, twelfth grade? I know, when I was in high school, I used to like science. I used to take all the science classes. What are some of the subjects? Anybody can just start talking, that you like most in high school? If not, tell me which subjects you don't like and why.

Student I like math.

Sidney Why do you like math?

Student ... It's easy. My father he taught me the math, you know how to do adding and things like that.

Sidney Anybody else?

Student Well, I like computer.

Sidney Who's your computer teacher?

Student Miss Nettles and the reason why I like computers is because today, we are using them more and I'm learning more about computers. And that's about it.

- Sidney Come on Tonya, I know you got some classes you like. Nothing you like? Well, I know there are some you don't like. Which ones don't you like? Tell me why?
- Student Math. It's kind of hard--especially algebra.
- Sidney ... What about you Denise?
- Student I like science.
- Sidney Tell me why you like science.
- Student Because it's dealing with life.
- Sidney What else?
- Student And things that you can learn about life. About your body and stuff.
- Student I like science too.
- Sidney Why do you like science?
- Student Because you know, you find a cure for stuff and you working in the lab.
- Student I like . . . science.
- Sidney You don't know why you like it?
- Student I guess because I understand because the teacher that's teaching me is a good one.
- Sidney And who is your teacher?
- Student . . . Lewis.
- Sidney Ok. Our next question is, after you finish high school, what do you want to do in life? After you finish high school. Do you want to go to the army?
- Student I want to go to college.
- Sidney Tell me why you think you want to go to college.
- Student So I just want to get a good education.
- Sidney Anybody else?

- Student Yeah, I want to um, go to college when I finish and become an engineer and why? Become an engineer because it ... well, you can make a lot of money.
- Student I want to go to college and become a lawyer.
- Sidney And why do you want to become a lawyer? Tell us why you want to be a lawyer.
- Student ...
- Sidney How about you Priscilla?
- Student I want to go to medical school to be a nurse or a doctor.
- Sidney And why do you want to be a nurse or a doctor? You said, I know earlier, on the first question, you said you find cures for diseases?
- Student I like to help sick people.
- Sidney How about you, Denise?
- Student I want to be a doctor.
- Sidney Why do you want to be a doctor?
- Student So I could help save people's lives.
- ? I want to go to college to be a cosmetologist.
- Sidney Ok. That's good. Why do you want to be a cosmetologist?
- Student So I know how to do hair.
- Sidney Alright, the next question is, when you hear the word "agriculture" tell me just what comes to mind. Just tell me. Anybody.
- Student Building, building things. Trees, farming.
- Sidney What do you think when you hear the word "agriculture?" What's the first thing that pops into your head? When you are just walking down the street? What's the first thing that pops into your head? Agriculture? Somebody else say a word.
- Student I think about forests.

- Sidney Why forests?
- Student Because I guess you see the trees and they are talking about trees.
- Sidney All the time? Denise?
- Student I think about farming.
- Sidney What type of farming? Just farming?
- Student Yeah
- Sidney Now, who lives on a farm? or Who lives in a different area?
- Student I do.
- Sidney What kind of farm you said? You said trees--you know anything about all that cotton they got, up in Loy (Alabama).
- Student Cows, horses.
- Sidney You never work in the summer time in them cotton fields? . . . they told me they work with somebody, I forgot who. Alright. Let's move on to our next question. Do you think people have a bad image of people in agriculture? When they hear about somebody being in agriculture, do you think they got a bad image like they might be, doing something wrong or might be doing something bad or it's not a job you want to be in? Anybody?
- Student Um. . . Can you repeat that question again? I hear you, but I don't quite understand the?
- Sidney Do you think people have a bad image of people in agriculture? As a whole, do you think society has a bad image of people in agriculture? Rom being a farmer, for example, being a dumb farmer, or somebody say ... What do you think about a person in agriculture?
- Student Well, I think they have a big responsibility.
- Sidney So, you have a good image of people in agriculture?
- Student I don't really know.
- Sidney People in agriculture, when you see a person that has a tree farm or you see a person who is farming, what comes to mind? Or what do

you think people think of other people like your parents? What do they think about people that farm and have cows or ...

Student I think if a person wanted to be interested in agriculture, um, it's not, you know, people don't have to you know, get angry ... if they think they are doing the job wrong, because if you think about agriculture, you probably know to get the job done right.

Student I don't know.

Sidney How about you Denise?

Student I think . . . because I think they are trying to do something to save the environment.

Sidney Environment, huh? What do you think Priscilla?

Student Most people think it's boring, but I think it's fun, because you get to enjoy nature.

Sidney The next question would be: Does anyone in your family, community, somebody go to your church, or friend work in agriculture? Now, before you say, ask, you may have somebody work with 4H youth, you might have a 4H person, you may have somebody that is an ag teacher, you might have somebody that works with US Dept of Agriculture, forestry service, you might know somebody that has a florist, the new shopping plaza that you all have out there now, you got people that drive ... trucks ... So does anybody have people that work in agriculture?

Student My aunt.

Sidney How about you ? Nobody work in agriculture at all? You have chickens at home, nobody in your family? Chickens in your yard? Your're raising chickens? That's agriculture. Garden, you got a small garden at home, right? Ok. How about you Denise?

Student My granddaddy.

Sidney How about you . . .

Student My father.

Sidney You're the only one that's got somebody? Ok. The next question will be: What have they said about opportunities in agriculture? Have you ever heard them ever say anything about some

opportunities in agriculture, like good jobs, good money. What do they say?

Student Well, they saying like if you get a job now in agriculture, it would be like showing you what you used to do. Like how to work with your crop and how to keep your plants and all that stuff like that. But they say they make good money.

Sidney How about you Denise? Do they say there are good opportunities, are they satisfied with what they are doing? In agriculture? What do they say about opportunities in ag?

Student Nothing, really.

Sidney How about you Priscilla?

Student No.

Sidney How about you. . .

Student . . . My granddaddy owns a florist shop in Chicago. I guess he liked it.

Sidney The next question would be: Some teachers talk about different career opportunities. I know you all got teachers tell you about different majors. Have your teachers or counselors ever mentioned a career in agriculture? Anybody? Any teachers ever say anything about agriculture?

Student yes.

Sidney And what do they say?

Student He said there is a good opportunity because you can make a lot of money if you go in that field. That's about it.

Sidney Anybody else? Anybody like Latoya's granddaddy say anything? How about you Priscilla? Your daddy say anything? Have you asked your teachers or counselors about opportunities in agriculture? Anybody just ever ask your teacher or counselor or grandad or anybody, say "Granddaddy, why do you like to, work in your garden? What's important out there?" Anybody?

Student My aunt, she says she just likes it. She just likes the idea about . . .

Sidney Ok, she liked it? Ok. The next question is: Are you considering a career in agriculture? Anybody?

- Student I have thought about it. But I ain't sure.
- Sidney Alright, tell me some of the careers that some of you are thinking about going into. You said you wanted to be a nurse. What career did you say you wanted to be in?
- Student A doctor.
- Sidney You wanted to be a lawyer?
- Student I wanted to be a RN.
- Sidney Anybody else? What did you want to become? Why do you think you wouldn't want to be in a career in agriculture?
- Student It isn't a reason that we don't want to be in agriculture, but you can take up that kind of stuff any time
- Sidney Why wouldn't you want to be in agriculture, a field of agriculture? Just tell me off the top of your head, why wouldn't you want to be in a field of agriculture? I know you want to be a lawyer, but why wouldn't you want, why haven't you thought about agriculture. Do you know that you could be a lawyer for an ag company and still be considered working in agriculture?
- Student Never thought of that.
- Sidney Alright, you could be defending a big oil company. You know, you've seen the big oil spills in Alaska, right? That's agriculture and then you've got to have a lawyer to defend you when you go to court, right? You might be a lawyer for Pulpwood Company or they might be wanting to cut more trees near your house and your daddy might not want them to cut trees, so you've got to defend there. So, why wouldn't you want to be in a field of agriculture? Priscilla? Why wouldn't you want to be in agriculture? You say you want to be a nurse. Why hadn't you thought about agriculture?
- Student It's not that I don't want to be in agriculture, but I never really thought about it.
- Sidney Denise?
- Student I don't like working with animals. I'm scared of them.
- Student I haven't thought about it.

Sidney Never even thought about it, huh? The next question is: What is it about agriculture that will make you want to work in it? Say if there was something about agriculture, is there anything about it that makes you want to work in that field? Anything? Is there anything that you've seen like working in a flower shop that might have caught your eye and you say "I wouldn't mind doing that" or going, having a big farm or working with kids in 4H youth. Anything about that might make you want to be a nutritionist, teaching people about their diets? A lot of times you see Black people with high blood pressure and that's related to diet--what they're eating. Anybody ever thought about what it is about agriculture that would make you want to work in ag? Is it too much chemicals in the water and people getting a lot of cancer, not from the chemicals, it might be from the environment. Denise said something about working in the environment? Anything there caught you that you might want to work in anything that you might want to change? You said something about the environment. What about the environment?

Student You know like people growing their own food. Like growing trees--to build homes to help provide shelter for you.

Sidney Michelle, tell me what else do you think the forests provide? Keep the earth cool, keep it warm,? You heard about the ozone layer? How they are destroying the ozone layer--we need more trees to grow and people are doing research on that--being scientific. Ok. So that's something else in agriculture. I guess we'll get to our eleventh question. We only have twelve. What do you suggest we do to get young people like yourself to think about agriculture as a career? What do you all think that we could do? I have told you about being a florist, I told you about 4H, I told you about the forest, I told you about water quality where you got a lot of people. I told you about being a nutritionist where you go in and help older people who are sick about what they are eating and eating all those different sweets and stuff. What do you suggest that we do to get young people like yourself, to get them thinking about a career in agriculture? Anybody? What do you think we should do to get people to just think about agriculture? Young people just to let them know about the opportunities. Anything you think we should do, uh? Priscilla?

Student Just take them on trips, you know, outdoors or let them work during the summer.

Sidney Denise?

Student Always could have more classes about it so they can make it more interesting.

- Sidney What do you think Latoya? To make people become aware and understand agriculture? What do you think we need to do? Young people like yourself so that they can know instead of alot of people not know that much about agriculture. What do you think we should do?
- Student I think talk about it more and like she said, take em on field trips and stuff.
- Sidney What do you think ?
- Student Um . . . I would talk to them and. . . I think agriculture is like dependent on their life and things. Because like if they have a farm or anything like that, and the food that they're growing inside their field, they . . . had to eat things like that and water. And they have to drink the water.
- Sidney What do you say Latoya?
- Student Take the class and talk about it more.
- Student I think they should like bring someone that has experience . . .
- Sidney Alright, the next question will be: Do you have any final thoughts about agriculture as a field in which to work? Since this is the last question, I want to know any final thoughts. If you say uhhh what we talk about this morning--agriculture. "I don't care about it." Or you might say, uh we think we need to know more about it so that we can help people with their diets.
- Student I would like to do that.
- Sidney Nutrition?
- Student Yeah
- Sidney Ok. You see, you have to realize everything you eat, that hamburger you eat, all the clothes you got on, everything in the world is agriculture. Any final thoughts about agriculture as a field in which to work?
- Student
- Sidney You don't think you'll want to go in or you won't think about agriculture or whatever? Anybody? Latoya?

- Student Yeah. I would in nutrition.
- Student I don't know.
- Sidney And why don't you know? You all don't know why you don't know?
- Student Because I . . .
- Sidney Priscilla?
- Student I always want to work in a greenhouse or I think I would like agriculture.
- Sidney So horticulture and floraculture? Denise?
- Student I always work in a lab or something.
- Sidney Latoya. . . I want to thank you all for taking time out.

Group 2/Wilcox Girls

Sidney Good afternoon, and welcome to our session. My name is Sidney Brown and I'm a graduate student in the Agriculture College at Iowa State University. Assisting me is Sheila Brown, also from Iowa State University. We are trying to gain information about Black Student's perceptions toward agriculture as a career of choice. You were selected because you have certain things in common that are of interest to us. We are interested in your views because you are representatives of others in this state. Today, we will be discussing your perceptions of careers in agriculture. There are no right or wrong answers, but differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. Before we begin, let me remind you of some ground rules. This is strictly as research project. There are no rules. Please speak up. Only one person should talk at a time. We're recording this session because we don't want to miss any of your comments. Remember, we only sing together--not talk together. Respect each person. We will be on a first name basis only. On our later report, there will not be any names attached to comments. Our session will last about an hour and we will not take a formal break. We have about twelve questions and we'll begin with the first question. The first question is: What are some of the subjects in high school that you've taken that you like or what are some of the subjects you dislike and tell me why. What are some of the subjects you like in high school, Karen? Anything in high school you like, any class you like to take? Tell me what you don't like. Everybody's going to answer for me today, so feel relaxed and feel free to answer.

Student What I like?

Sidney What class you like and tell me why. You like math because you can use your mind. You can think deeper or you dislike math for some other reason.

Student Government. I dislike government.

Sidney Why do you dislike government?

Student The teacher gives alot of stuff to do.

Sidney A lot of homework?

Student A lot of classwork. Don't have no homework.

Sidney Another class? Teresa?

- Student Um. I like computer class cause that what I'll major in when I go to college.
- Sidney Barbara
- Student I like secretary procedures because you get to learn things that you didn't know. You learn to carry yourself better.
- Sidney Ok. How about you Josseta?
- Student I like computer class because I like playing on the computer.
- Sidney Dimitrie? Dimitrico?
- Student I like masonry, because I like to make bricks.
- Sidney Deronda?
- Student? Computer, because I . . . understand alot more about the keys and the information that is stored.
- Sidney Ok. How about you?
- Student I like masonry, because most of the time I
- Sidney What are your plans after you finish high school? Anybody ask what you going to join the army, or will you go to a trade school in Thomasville? What do you want to do? Go to a 4 year school, you want a . . . school? Anybody? Just start. Karen, you want to go to a trade school? What you going to take up in trade school? Do you know yet? What have you been thinking about? You been thinking about cosmetology? How about you? Jessette?
- Student I was planning on going to Jones State in Birmingham. It's a 2 year junior college and I want to take up nursing.
- Sidney Alright, Demitrie?
- Student I plan on going to Stillman, a 4-year college an I plan on taking up computer science.
- Sidney How about you Barbara?
- Student I'm undecided.

Sidney You don't know which way you want to go. How about you ?

Student I'm going to go to Alabama State and take up computer technology.

Sidney How about you?

Student I don't know what college yet, but I want to major in business administration.

Sidney ?

Student I want to go to . . . College and take up computer program.

Sidney What kind of college?

Student Trade?

Sidney In Birmingham.

Sidney Ok. Alright, next question is: When you hear the word "agriculture" what is the first thing that pops into your mind? When somebody says something about agriculture. What's the first thing that pops into your mind? Anybody? Anything pops on top of your head? The first time you hear somebody say anything about agriculture, what is the first thing you see in your mind?

Student Work?

Sidney Is it hard work, good work? or bad work, which one . . . ?

Student Both.

Sidney Hard work as well as good work?

Student Hard work as well as good work?

Student Yeah.

Sidney What does she think about?

Student Farms.

Sidney What type of farms? Any kind in particular?

Student Planning, planting trees and. . .

- Sidney How about you . . .? What do you think about when somebody say something about agriculture?
- Student Basically, the farm.
- Sidney Terese?
- Student ?
- Sidney Ok.
- Student ?
- Sidney How about Dimitrie?
- Student Selling cows
- Sidney What else?
- Student That's all.
- Sidney Karen?
- Student A lot of hard work.
- Sidney A lot of hard work. Ok. Do you think people have a bad image of people that work in agriculture? Like we see somebody working in agriculture, like you said, selling cows. Do you think other people look down at people who sell cows and work in agriculture? Dimitrie? Or do you think they got a good image? Say they are making good money--are they making whatever?
- Student Yes.
- Sidney Yes what? Do you think people have a bad image of agriculture
- Student Some people. Some people think that that it's bad. They think--they get embarrass.
- Sidney What do you think Jossetta?
- Student I think it is a good image.
- Sidney Ok. What do you think Terese?
- Student I think it's a bad image.

- Sidney What kind of bad image do you think it might have?
- Student Where people be trying to sell stuff, you know think like Africa, places . . .
- Sidney They all wanting to do what?
- Student Don't be wanting to buy it.
- Sidney Ok. But they have to buy it anyway in the end? They want to eat. What's the bad image you may have Jossetta, because you said . . . think people have good images. Tell me one of the good images you think.
- Student Like maybe they deal with marketing.
- Sidney Anything else you can think of?
- Student And they . . .
- Sidney Deronda?
- Student Things of good image. Good money.
- Sidney Ok, tell me some of the good images. You say good money, what's another? That's images you think is good about agriculture?
- Student . . . good money.
- Sidney Barbara?
- Student A good image, because you need to learn more about the world and help make the world a better place.
- Sidney How do you think they make the world a better place? How do you think they can help make the world a better place? In your own mind?
- Student By keeping it clean and not cutting down the trees and stuff, but they have to cut down the trees in order to get paper.
- Sidney That's good. Alright, Karen? What do you think about the public's image of agriculture? How do you think people feel about other people being in agriculture? And they see somebody riding down the road, maybe driving a pulpwood truck, or working in a paper mill or working with 4-H youth development. You have a 4H person come in and tell me how do you think people feel about society?

Student Good.

Sidney Tell me some of the good things you think of. Some of the good images. What do you mean by good images? What you think of as a good image may be a bad image to somebody else. What do you mean by good image? How about you Tawanda?

Student Some people don't like seasonal work. They don't like to be outside and work, like paper . . . might rain or something.

Sidney Question #5. Does anyone in your family, your community, your church, or your friends work in agriculture? They might work for the soil conservation service, they might work with the 4H. they might be a florist. I see you all have a new florist down on the bypass. When they sell roses for 15 dollars a stem. They got landscaping where somebody when they first made the school, they had to design the front of it and they did a pretty good job to get to do landscaping. They got somebody to drive pulpwood trucks. So does anybody here have anybody that works in agriculture? Anybody? Karen, you got anybody? Tawanda?

Student

Sidney Does anybody have a momma or daddy that have a garden at home or chickens? That's agriculture. You're feeding yourself. So we'll go back to Karen. Anybody in your family got a garden? So your parents work in agriculture and you hadn't thought about it. How about now, Tawanda?

Student

Sidney How about you Daronda?

Student Yes. My uncle.

Sidney Ok. Now what does your uncle do?

Student He raise cows and hogs and chickens and stuff.

Sidney How about you, Teresa?

Student My grandma. She got a garden.

Sidney How about you, Dimitrie?

Student My uncle works at MacMillan . . .

- Sidney Tell me now, the few people you said that you knew that worded in agriculture have they mentioned any opportunities like the different types of jobs in agriculture?. . . With the forestry service and identifying trees, or working on the computer equipment, putting data in the computer. Any of the people you know ever talk to you about different careers in agriculture?
- Student Mr. . . .
- Sidney What did he say?
- Student ?
- Sidney Anybody else? He said that people usually like their jobs in masonry?
- Student Make good money.
- Sidney Let's go on to the next question. Some teachers talk about different careers. I know it's like saying the same things over, but have any of your teachers or counselors ever said what about something in agriculture? Or anything, you know like hotel/restaurant management--that comes under the agriculture college. I know, like designing clothes, that comes under the agriculture. You all know that, right? Home Economics and make shirts and stuff like that. Home Economics comes under agriculture, so have any of your teachers ever talked about agriculture or careers in agriculture?
- Student No.
- Sidney Anybody else? Alright. Have you ever asked your teachers or counselors about opportunities in agriculture? Anybody ever done that before?
- Student No.
- Sidney Uh. The next question is: Has anybody here ever--have you ever thought about a career in agriculture? And if you did, why did you think about it? And if you did not, why you never thought about a career in agriculture or careers in agriculture?
- Student Yeah. Because you can make good money laying bricks.
- Sidney Ok. Dimitrie? Have you ever thought about it, why have you thought it? Because it never crossed your mind?

- Student No.
- Sidney It never crossed your mind?
- Student No.
- Sidney Jessetta?
- Student Yes.
- Sidney Teresa?
- Student ?
- Sidney Barbara?
- Student No.
- Sidney Why do you think you never thought about it?
- ? I don't know.
- Sidney Derronda?
- Student Yeah.
- Sidney Why did you think about it? What were you thinking about?
- Student I . . . last year . . . in computers because it can be good money.
- Sidney Tawanda? You thought about why you never thought about agriculture? What is it about agriculture that would make you want to work in the area? Is there anything in agriculture--I mean, I just told you alot of different careers in agriculture. Anything in agriculture that would want to make any of you want to work in agriculture?
- Student Making the world more beautiful.
- Sidney Ok. You think that's important? To make the world more beautiful? What about you Terese?
- Student
- Sidney How about you Dimitrea?

- Student I don't know.
- Sidney The same question. Repeat the question again. What is about agriculture that will make you want to work in the area? Is there anything? Deronda? That will make you want to work in agriculture ?
- Student Yeah. The experience . . .
- Sidney How about you Tawanda?
- Student Yeah.
- Sidney What is it? What will make you want to work in agriculture?
- Student You get to do different kinds of things, like be a . . .
- Sidney How about you . . . ?
- Student Yeah.
- Sidney What would make you want to work?
- Student You probably be doing something 2 or 3 minutes, while another person might be doing hours and hours
- Sidney Karen?
- Student
- Sidney And why not? Why wouldn't you want to work in the area at all? Question #11. What do you suggest that we get young people like yourself to think about a career How can we get young people like Black females like yourself, to just even think about a career? You said you don't want to think about a career in agriculture? How do you think we can get young people like yourself? What do we need to do to get you to even think about it? I didn't say get a job, I just said even think about it. Anybody got any suggestions about what we can do? See, I also do recruiting at the college of agriculture at Iowa State. What can we do to get young people to even think about a career in agriculture?
- Student Talk to them about . . .
- Sidney Alright. What else? Anything Terese?
- Student ?

- Sidney Ok.
- Student ?
- Sidney Jessette?
- Student . . . They'll get it.
- Sidney Ok. Tawanda?
- Student ?
- Sidney Dimitrea? What can we do to just young, Black females like yourself to just think about agriculture? Anything we could do, do you think? Anything teachers could do? Counselors? or anybody?
- Student Tell how good agriculture is.
- Sidney How do you think we should go about doing that? How should we tell them? Do we need to just tell them, or what else do we have to do?
- Student Just tell them.
- Sidney I said, what do you suggest we do to get young people to just think about agriculture?
- Student Talk to them about money.
- Sidney The last question would be: Do you have any final thoughts? Now, we talked about this for the last 30 minutes. Do you have any final thoughts about agriculture I mean, anything you want to tell me? Man, you get out of my face, or whatever, just tell me. Do you have any final thoughts about anything in agriculture? Just tell me, I ain't never thought about it, before we came in here. Any final thoughts or anything anybody wants to say that I can't? Tawanda? Dimitria?
- Student Can you repeat that?
- Sidney Do you have any final thoughts about agriculture as a field in which to work? Any final thoughts? Just tell me anything. Anything you can think of right now? I . . . anything, just tell me.
- Student First, I hadn't thought about it. I think I thought about it now. I'd like to work in the field of agriculture.

Sidney Jessetta?

Student It's a good field because it's a well, a goody paying job.

Sidney Barbara?

Student Well, because you can take all the . . . and learn all about . . .

Sidney Deronda?

Student I learned a lot. Alot of things I never thought of there was um, in agriculture and never thought about it . . .

Sidney Tawanda?

Student

Sidney I want to think you all for coming out this afternoon and discussing agriculture with me.

Group 4/Wilcox Boys

- Sidney Good morning and welcome to our session. My name is Sidney Brown and I'm a graduate student in the agricultural college at Iowa State University. Assisting me is Sheila Brown, also from Iowa State University. We are trying to gain information about Black students' perceptions toward agriculture as a career of choice. You were selected because you have certain things in common that are of interest to us. We are interested in your views because you are representatives of others in the state. Today, we will be discussing your perceptions of careers in agriculture. There are no right or wrong answers, but differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view--even if it differs from what others have said. Before we begin, let me remind you of some ground rules. This is strictly a research project--there are no rules. Please speak up. Only one person should talk at a time. We are recording this session because we don't want to miss any of your comments. Remember, we can only sing together--not talk together. Respect each person. We will be on a first name basis only. On our later reports, there will not be any names attached to comments. Our session will last about an hour and we will not take a formal break. So we'll begin with our first question. The first question is: What are some of the subjects of the classes that you take in high school? That you like the most? And then tell me why you like them. Anybody. Wherever you want to start. What are some of the classes you take in high school that you like the most and tell me why you like them. Eric?
- Student One of my favorite classes is Forestry. Do you want me to name all of them at once or just the ...
- Sidney Yeah. Tell me why you like . . .
- Student You know it's a good thing if I can learn about the state. What things . . . can offer. The careers, job careers, what could go into . . . Alabama. Has more trees and produces most of the renewable resources.
- Sidney What's another class you like?
- Student English.
- Sidney Why do you like English?
- Student Mostly, because you got to know it to make it in life.
- Sidney Alright, Michael, tell me some of the classes you like.

- Student I like forestry, because you get to deal with planting trees and you learn trees that you use and it's nice to know what kind of trees you have around your place so you know how to market them. I like agribusiness, because you can learn how to make things, get to learn some of the techniques people use in doing things and basically I like to work around animals. You get to do that in agriculture also.
- Sidney Any other class?
- Student Not really.
- Sidney Alright, Dimitrie?
- Student One of my best classes is English, Government Economics because you get to know about your history and mostly the history.
- Sidney Ok.
- Student In the forestry club, you get to go outside and you know, you get to go outside and learn about the outside.
- Sidney Alright, how about you, James?
- Student One of my classes that I like is accounting. The reason I like accounting is because I plan to be an accountant when I grow up because you need to know how to manage money and all that. And the next class that I like is also government because you can know about our government cause, it like on a political basis and I also like forestry because in forestry, you get to learn all about different types of trees and how the wood is processed into making types of materials and stuff.
- Sidney How about you, Jermaine?
- Student One of my favorite classes is forestry. I like forestry because before I enrolled in the program I didn't know anything about trees. Now, I think I know a little bit about trees and basically, I just like going into the woods and looking at a tree and being about to know the name of it. My other class is band. I kind of like band. We listen to classical music and learn how to play classical music.
- Sidney Alright, tell me which classes do you like the least and then tell me why. Which class do you all now like?
- Student English

- Sidney Why you don't you like English?
- Student Ms. Charlie, she a rough teacher.
- Sidney What do you mean by a rough teacher?
- Student She likes to dog you. Not really dog, just like to load you down with a lot of work. She kind of has a way,
- Sidney James, what class do you like the least?
- Student Uh...
- Sidney You like all of them?
- Student Most of them.
- Sidney Ok. How about you, Jermaine?
- Student The class I least like is math. . . she pours the work on you. Everyday she gives you a new assignment or something every day.
- Sidney How about you Demitrie?
- Student Also English. Mrs. Charlie she don't explain right.
- Sidney She goes too fast?
- Student Uh huh.
- Sidney How about you Eric? Alright, next question is: After you finish high school, what do you want to do, do you want to go to the military, junior college, or go on to college? Tell me, what are your plans after high school?
- Student First, I plan on going to a junior college for 2 years, take up a trade . . . ???
- Sidney How about you . . . ?
- Student I may also go to a junior college and then transfer and take up occupational physical therapist and transfer to UAB.
- Student After I graduate, I plan on, before I start school, I plan on traveling a little bit.

- Sidney Where are you going to travel? Where do you want to travel to?
- Student First of all, I'm going to fly to Pennsylvania and check on what's going on up there. Then I'm going to fly to New York and probably go to Pasadena, California.
- Sidney How about you, Jermaine?
- Student After I finish high school, I plan to attend the military for about 3 years. If I don't like it, then maybe I'll go to college.
- Sidney Our third question is: When you hear the word agriculture, what's the first thing that will come to your mind? What's the first picture you see in your mind when you think somebody say "agriculture." What would you say?
- Student ??
- Sidney What else?
- Student Animals, trees, soil and diet.
- Sidney Speak up. Say that again.
- Student The things that we could . . .
- Sidney Dimitrie?
- Student I think about animals and
- Student The first thing I think about when I hear "agriculture" is trees because most, my dad he has his own business and working with trees. I think about agriculture is about trees.
- Sidney What kind of business does he have? What does he call it?
- Student Logging.
- Sidney Does he own it?
- Student Yeah.
- Student When I hear the word agriculture, the only thing that comes to my mind is trees and all kinds of plants, animals, insects and everything. You know.
- Sidney How about you, Mike?

? When I hear the word "agriculture", I think about money because I had the experience of owning some cows and horses and I know that there is a profit and basically I think about animals and driving tractors and planting things like that.

Sidney Alright now, when we look at people in your community, the next door neighbor. Do you think people in the community as a whole, have a bad image of people in agriculture? You know, they might raise some cows. Do you think their neighbors kind of thought you were a poor farmer or somebody like you got a bad image of people in agriculture? So everybody got to answer this one. Let's start with Mike first.

Mike Yes, because anybody that goes and looks at someone else's farm or something, they see something that they could do to it to make it better so I think they "down" people alot.

Sidney What else do they say?

Student They say that you're not feeding your cows properly or you're not planting your grass at the right time, things like that.

Sidney How about you . . . Do you think people when they see people, you know driving Polkwood Trucks or own a Polkwood Company, do you think they think something bad about that or you think they got a bad image? What Mike said, they don't know what they're doing--you can always do it better. What do you think?

Student Alot of people think they could do lots better.

Sidney Like what? So what are some of the things they might say, like you ever heard them say?

Student I've seen people say that uh, that we're not cutting the wood properly. They're not picking up the right types of trees, . . . would be better cut at certain times of the year. What would make more money. They really don't look it up. They just really don't understand how much or what trees . . . or anything--you know, costs. How much money you get.

Sidney How about you Jermaine? I know you said your dad owns Polkwood Company. Does anybody have a bad image of your father? Well received in your community? Do people look up to him? How do people feel your daddy being an agriculture owner of a forestry logging company?

- Student I would say most people they don't really like it because they think . . . is more than everybody else, which he doesn't. Anyway. I would say. they say that like us, basic Black people. Ok. If they see . . . that he is doing then they won't pay him. They'll give a . . . and talk about it, but us as Black people, we should, you know, stop doing it. We should come and tell him what he's doing wrong for him to make it better. Help one another because like we are now, Black people, they ain't had . . . say so and then we just help one another instead of . . . him down.
- Sidney Always remember never to say all Black people--say some.
- Student Yeah, right. Some.
- Sidney Alright, Dimitrie? You never heard anybody say anything bad about agriculture or anything?
- Student No.
- Sidney You never heard it? Mean you ain't never seen anybody with a hog in their backyard. They might have said, "Man, what are you doing with a hog in your backyard?"
- Student No.
- Sidney What about you, Jermaine?
- Student I live near a farm. My grandma used to have some hogs. People would say "You ought to go and kill them hogs, cause they're not making any money."
- Sidney So they thought they weren't making no money in agriculture?
- Student Right.
- Sidney And what do you think about that?
- Student About agriculture?
- Sidney I mean what you think about what they said.
- Student About my grandma?
- Sidney Yes.
- Student I . . . she . . .

- Sidney Next question. Does anyone in your family, community, church or friends, work in agriculture? I mean does anybody, work in 4-H, own a logging company, work in a florist like that new florist on the bypass? Anybody drive trucks? Drive Polkwood trucks. Anybody work for the soil conservation service? Anybody work for the US Department of Agriculture? You all know anybody that work, any friends, or relatives work in agriculture?
- Student My father.
- Sidney Your father? What does he do?
- Student Forest ranger.
- Sidney Where?
- Student ????
- Sidney Ok. Is he in Wilcox County or in another county? Alright, how about you, Dimitrie?
- Student My father, he works at MacMillan Bloedel. He deals with
?
- Sidney Ok. How about you, Mike?
- Student My father, he kinda owns his own farms you know, he has a couple of small plots.
- Sidney Is it a small farm or is it kind of a big farm? How would you. . .
- Student Small farm.
- Sidney How about you, Jermaine?
- Student My father, he works at MacMillan Bloedel.
- Sidney What is MacMillan? Tell us what that is.
- Student It's one of the major places where they cut down trees and sell wood and stuff like that.
- Sidney How about you . . . ?
- Student I have an uncle--he works for my dad. He drives log trucks.

- Sidney So your daddy he owns his own logging company? So tell us on the microphone, what does your daddy do now again? Tell us what your father does.
- Student Basically, my daddy goes out and finds land for people and he cut it. He just goes and tells the crew where to go cut, how to do it.
- Sidney Alright. Next question is: Now, has any of those people. Each one of you said you knew somebody in agriculture. Has any of them said anything about opportunities in agriculture? Do they say there's alot of opportunities in agriculture? Or do they say there ain't no opportunities or were they satisfied with their jobs? Start with you Mike. Does your daddy say that there's alot of opportunities.
- Student He tells me there's alot of opportunities in agriculture. He tells me that if I don't like the animals scent in some jobs, then I could sit behind a desk and don't have to go outside.
- Sidney So he said you'd probably be satisfied with a job in agriculture?
- Student Yes sir.
- Sidney How about you, Dimitrie? What your daddy say? Does he say there's a lot of opportunities or he ain't never said nothing about it?
- Student
- Sidney You don't know? Ok. How about you? Does your father say there's alot of opportunities in agriculture?
- Student He says there's alot of opportunities in Forestry? I'll major in it.
- Sidney Did he say he was satisfied with his job?
- Student He says he's satisfied.
- Sidney How about you, James? Your daddy say there's alot of opportunities in agriculture or Forestry?
- Student Yeah. He says there's alot of opportunities because maybe one day I'll be taking over the company. I could make my own big money.
- Sidney Alright. Did he say he was satisfied with the job?
- Student With his job he's got? Yeah.

- Sidney So you can say, he loves his job?
- Student Yes.
- Sidney How about you, Jermaine?
- Student Well, I guess you can say my dad is satisfied with his job. He been working there about 25 years.
- Sidney Ok.
- Student So, we really don't talk about agriculture because he wants me to go to college.
- Sidney So, does he don't they have alot to do with being in agriculture?
- Student Yeah.
- Sidney Ok. I was just trying to clarify your statement. Next question would be: Some teachers talk about different career opportunities right? Have your teachers or counselors ever mentioned agriculture as a career? Anybody? Like some teachers tell you, "Why don't you go be an accountant or nurse or doctor." Anybody? Any of your teachers or counselors ever want you all to major in agriculture since all 5 of you seem to know somebody in agriculture? You know they might say, "Well, your daddy does this or your uncle does that. Why don't you maybe do something in agriculture?" Anybody ever told you all that?
- Student A counselor told me about a career in Forestry will be good, or you could make alot of money in.
- Sidney How about you Jermaine? Teachers or counselors or coach or anybody else say anything to you about agriculture?
- Student They just say the farm.
- Sidney James?
- Student Not really of the other teachers besides Mr. Parham.
- Sidney Any of your teachers or counselors?
- Student Miss Carter.
- Sidney Miss Carter? Ok. How about ... Mike? ... Gosen, Mr. Carter & Miss Palham. They always say there's good money in agriculture.

- Sidney So you all have pre-ag teachers down at Wilcox Central High School?
- Student Yes sir.
- Sidney Next question will be #8. Have you asked your teacher/counselors about opportunities in agriculture. Any of you went up to counselor's office and say, "Look, can you give me some more information on opportunities in agriculture?" Anybody ever done that? Anybody who did that?
- Student Yes
- Sidney Ok, Mike, what did they say when you went up there?
- Student They said there is alot of scholarships that the USDA can give you and through some of the major colleges can give scholarship also.
- Sidney Anybody else? My next question is #9. Are you considering a career in agriculture? If you are, tell me why and if you're not, tell me why not. Start with Jermaine? Are you considering a career in agriculture? If so, tell me why or why not.
- Student At first, not really, but since you've been talking to us, I guess I will try it.
- Sidney How about you, Mike?
- Student Yes, I am considering a job in agriculture because of the money.
- Sidney Any other reason?
- Student Basically, I like used my hands and to be on the outside, being around animals.
- Sidney James?
- Student At first, not really, but the way you explained it now, I can see it clearer about taking on my dad's business. I think I could give it a try and go and major in Forestry.
- Sidney How about you, Eric?
- Student Yes.
- Sidney You consider a career in ag? Tell me why you're thinking about it.

- Student What I want to major in is engineering so I like math and stuff so .
- Sidney Alright, how about you, Dimitrie?
- Student ...
- Sidney You're not thinking about it right now.
- Student If I had a choice, I'd think about something else.
- Sidney Tell me why you're not really thinking about ag? Tell me what else you talking about. Why you not going to think about since you said you're not thinking about it.
- Student Well, I am thinking about doing alot of things, animals and that kind of stuff. Boring and hard work.
- Sidney Now the field you going into, you think you ain't gonna have to do alot?
- Student Hopefully not, you know.
- Student Planting trees and stuff . . . it's a bore.
- Sidney You know there's other things you can do in agriculture besides that? Question #10 is: What is it about agriculture that will make you want to work in the area? Is there anything you all thought about in agriculture that will want to make you to work in that are? Anybody. Anything that would make you want to work in agriculture? See, he's the only one said he didn't want to work in the area. Is anybody . . . Dimitrie? Anything you want to tell us what will make you want to be (even though you all want to work in the area) what will make you want to work in the area? Just anything you thought about. All you know about agriculture. Anything that might want to make you work in the area? Anything at all, if so, say it and . . . You hadn't thought about it till now? How about you, Eric. Is there anything you think that will make you want to work in say agriculture instead of being a doctor or lawyer or being an English teacher or being a nurse's aid or being a secretary or a janitor? . . . anything? Between one of those careers that would make you want to be in agriculture? Nothing special about agriculture? How about you, James? Anything special? How about the opportunities of maybe one day owning your own business or something like that? That wouldn't excite nobody? James, would that excite you?

- Student Well . . .
- Sidney Since nobody knew or could answer #10, why do you want to work in agriculture, we'll move on to #11. What do you suggest as a student, Black student, we do to try to get kids like yourself, to start thinking about agriculture as a career? You know, to go in and work in agriculture? What do you all sit here and talk about the 10 previous questions about agriculture. What do you all think we should do to get kids to just start thinking about agriculture? I didn't say "work" in agriculture. Just to think about a career in agriculture. Just make them even think about it. James? You like to ready to jump out your seat. James, what do you think we could do to just get kids to think about a career in agriculture?
- Student I will say that we could talk to them about agriculture and some of the important features that agriculture can offer them.
- Sidney How about you, Eric?
- Student Money. Just tell them about the job--how much money the forest offers. The jobs or careers or what they can get.
- Sidney Yeah, but you also still need to tell them about how agriculture ain't no easy major.
- Student You know, you got to do your lesson, your work cause you know you have to be practical.
- Sidney How about you, Mike. What do you think we could do to get people to think about agriculture? What can we do to get kids just Black kids to think about agriculture?
- Student I think we should go some place and meet some other Black people that are successful in agriculture and let them tell about the money and what they do at work and it's not all hard labor.
- Sidney How about you, Jermaine?
- Student Like Mike said. I think that the school should you know, take more kids on more field trips and teach them about careers in agriculture.
- Sidney How about you, Dimitrie? Anything you think we could tell kids to just think about agriculture? Anything you think we could do to do that? To make kids a G-Bend or Pine Hill or Coy, or Frisco City, Alabama just start thinking about agriculture as a career?

- Student Yeah, I honestly think having trips.
- Sidney Do you have any final thoughts about agriculture in a field in which to work? Anything you all thought about what we said today? You all have any final thoughts about agriculture is a field in which to work? I changed your mind What you say?
- Student Yeah, you changed my mind. I think I want to major in it now.
- Sidney Why? What did you say I said that . . . What did you think we said here today that make you want to change your mind?
- Student All the things, you know.
- Sidney Give me one example. Other than money.
- Student ???
- Sidney That's a good one. How about you, Jermaine?
- Student You know, you said don't say money, but that kinda put a ring in my ear--moneywise..
- Sidney That's good. What has made you change when you first came in here? What has made you change your mind, your thoughts about agriculture? As a field in which to work?
- Student I would say, my dad has a business and if I go to school and learn a little bit more about Forestry maybe one day I can run the logging business. .
- Sidney Now, clarify what your father did what? He worked in the logging business, right?
- Student He owns his own logging business.
- Sidney How about you, Eric?
- Student I thought alot about the things you said, like, you know, working in research, buy land. Not the money, you know, being Black people try to get more
- Sidney How about you, Michael?
- Student I was thinking that since there aren't that many Black people in agriculture that there will be alot of job advancements for Black

people and that they could earn alot of money and the field of agriculture.

Sidney Ok. I want to thank you all for coming out today and listening to my questions and participating in my focus group.

Group 2/males/Davenport Central

- Sidney My name is Sidney Brown, I'm a graduate student in the college of agriculture at Iowa State University. Assisting me is Diana Mitchell, also from Iowa State. We're here today to gain information on Black student's perceptions toward agriculture as a career of choice. There are no right or wrong answers--only different points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view--even if it differs from what others have said. Before we begin, let me remind you of some ground rules. This is strictly a research project. There are no rules. Please speak up. Only one person should talk at a time. We're recording this session because we don't want to miss any of your comments. We will be on a first name basis only. On our later reports, there will not be any names attached to comments. Our session will last about an hour and we will not take a formal break. So let's begin. We've placed name cards in front of you so that we can remember each one of your names. The first question I want to start with is: When I think back to high school, when I was in high school, some of the courses I just despised were like English. I had to write a paper and express myself. And another one was science. What are some of the courses in high school that you enjoy the most and tell me why. Can we start with anybody? What were some of the courses?
- Diana I know you've got to like some classes.
- Student Like marketing, business law--you know--those are the fields I'm going to go into when I go to college anyway, so you know, I enjoy them more than I would Ap English 7th period, I'm sleepy anyway.
- Diana Do you like these courses . . . hoping to them? How about you Craig?
- Student Probably stuff like drafting, and art and stuff like that, because I want to be an architect . . . And those kind of go hand in hand.
- Sidney . . . Anything you like? Any classes you like? If no, we'll go on, I know. We got another question for you.
- Student Math.
- Diana Why do you like math so much?
- Student I'm good at it.
- Diana Alright. Moving right along. . .
- Student I just like math.

- Diana Why do you like math?
- ? It's pretty easy
- Diana What kind of math courses? General math or algebra?
- Student Algebra.
- Diana Was that algebra for you, too Nate? Mario?
- Student I like all of my classes that I have this semester.
- Diana Like what?
- Student . . . are very very difficult.
- Diana ????
- Student I have a . . . my favorites are commercial art, public speaking . . .
- Sidney We go back with the next question. Which classes do you like the least and then tell me why. We'll start with you, Nick, since you didn't like any classes.
- Student I don't like English.
- Sidney You don't like English? Then why don't you like English?
- Student I don't like writing reports and stuff.
- Sidney Ishmael?
- Student I don't know.
- Sidney . . . what don't you like, man?
- Student I really don't like reading, but it's alright. I don't like writing that much.
- Sidney Ok. Now you know those two reading and writing are essential to . I had to learn it the hard way also. Mario?
- Student Well, this semester . . .
- Diana Let's go back to Ishmael. You don't like reading or writing, why?

Student I'll read if I have to, but I don't like reading in my spare time.

Sidney Is it hard?

Diana Time consuming? Boring

Student Boring.

Diana What about you, Clyde?

Student English

Diana What is the problem with English, here?

Student Too much writing.

Diana You don't like to write. Why don't you like to write?

Student It gets boring. You get sleepy.

Diana Boring.

Student

Diana Why?

Student Because I didn't . . .

Diana Is it pretty difficult?

Student . . . difficult, it just too . . .

Diana Complicated?

Student Yeah.

Diana Too much homework?

Student Yeah.

Sidney How about you, Brad?

Student Probably history.

Sidney Tell me why you don't like History.

- Student Because, like most of the time class, it doesn't tell you anything--it doesn't go into detail about us--it's more about white people, I guess. I don't get . . .
- Sidney So, do you read on your own outside of the classroom? About history?
- Student Not really, no.
- Sidney So, if you're bored, don't you think that'd be a good way of enjoying history, as reading other history and find out what other people did?
- Student Maybe it could be.
- Diana Contribute to class discussion, also.
- Sidney And then you could ask, bring something up for Black History month or whatever. Say "Let's do this, this week, Miss whoever." That's be a good idea.
- Diana Then you could bring us some of your readings this year with the class maybe. . . . it's something to think about. What about you. . .
- Student Physics.
- Diana Physics?
- Student Just because I don't know what I'm doing.
- Diana No idea?
- Student No. I'll get by--I'll pass, but not like I would in the other class, like English.
- Diana How come you don't know what you're doing? Don't you take a prep course . . . did you take a class before Physics?
- Student Chemistry.
- Diana Chemistry.
- Student That's nothing to do with physics, though. Just complicated.
- Diana Complicated. Alright.
- Sidney Alright, I know when I was in high school, I guess when I was going to finish I said, "Man, I'm going to the army. I ain't going to

no school." But I got a football scholarship and that changed my life, so tell me, what are your plans after you finish high school? Mario? Maybe you haven't thought that far, but if you say college, tell me if it's a 3-year college or 4-year college or a technical school or a business school or--tell me about it.

- Student I have lots of time. Things have changed just recently. A lot of things changed. I tell you when I started out that's when I first started thinking about college real seriously, I was probably in 8th grade or so. I want to be an engineer, basically, like a civil engineer, electrical engineer. I like mechanics and stuff like that. I start taking the classes that I need to take and everything. I plan to go to Florida Tech or Iowa State or somewhere like that. And then, things started changing--I found out that I was good at public speaking and that I wanted to be a motivational speaker and like at the state I'm at now, I don't really know, because I haven't found colleges that I can go to just for speaking. It seems that that's something that you just are good at .
- Diana Well, that's a big switch--from engineering to English, but now maybe . . .
- Student It shocked me.
- Diana Communications . . . from engineering to English?
- Student Because, I had a problem with being good at everything. I could have done anything I wanted to do. I could be . . .
- Diana I don't see that as being a problem.
- Student It's a problem when you're trying to decide what you want to do because I like everything and I was good at everything, so it's like . . . I was good at math and I like science and everything and then I found out that I was good at speaking, and involved with my church and everything--I was speaking there so it just kind of . . . Motivational speakers.
- Sidney So what do you mean by a motivational speaker? You mean, to go out and just do that for a living or do you mean, being one of the gorgeous doctors in the world, maybe a brain surgeon and go out and speak about motivating students about being a brain surgeon?
- Student Maybe something like that.
- Diana Your peers?

- Student I would rather, I don't know. Basically, probably youths.
- Sidney Ok.
- Student Because I feel that there's a need to motivate--mainly the Black youth, and on the side, I'm into art. So that would be. . .
- Diana Alright. Thank you.
- Student I really don't know what I'm going to do.
- Diana You don't know? Have you ever thought about it?
- Student A little bit.
- Diana You must thought about something. What you want to do when you get out of here.
- Student I like playing basketball.
- Diana You like playing basketball. Would you like to go to college and play basketball?
- Student Yeah.
- Sidney Have you started preparing for going to college and playing basketball. Are you going to be tall enough, do you think you're going to be strong enough.
- Student I work out alot.
- Sidney Alright, let's go on. Nick?
- Student I don't know--I haven't really been thinking about it.
- Sidney You haven't been thinking about it?
- Student No.
- Sidney You haven't talked about anything. You say "When I get out of this house . . ."
- Student I don't know.
- Sidney You don't even talk about it.
- Diana Craig

- Student ??
- Sidney Ok? That's good.
- Student I thought about it little bit, but I ain't gonna get . . .
- Diana Maybe go into medicine?
- Student Yeah.
- Diana Why?
- Student I don't know.
- Diana ???
- Student Well . . . scientist or something. I like . . . putting together?????
- Diana Something in chemistry? That's the only thing you thought about;
- Student So far.
- Student I want to go to college and major in business.
- Diana What kind of college? A business school? A technical school, a 4-year college?
- Student . . . Play sports, but if I don't . . . sports, play basketball . . . open up a business.
- Diana Craig?
- Student Yeah--I'm definitely going to college somewhere or another. My folks always kinda drilled it into my head since I was knee-high to a duck that I was going to college, no matter what.
- Diana So why do you suppose they did that?
- Student Probably because they figured that I'm going to need to in order to you know, live up to what I want to be now. . . . more people look at that . . . and educated you are.
- Diana 4-year college? Major in?
- Student Either in engineering or architecture.

- Sidney How about you . . . ?
- Student I think I'm the only senior of the bunch so I already know what my plans are. I'm going to Texas Southern. I got an early decision. I'm pretty sure it's going to go through. They haven't sent me the letter saying application or stuff like that, but I've been down there a couple of times--they've asked me to come down there. I've seen the baseball field--coaches talked to me and I don't know about scholarships and stuff yet, but you know, I'm pretty sure I'm going to go down there and major in marketing and I want to get into advertising too.
- Diana Ok. So what sport? Football?
- Student I'd rather play baseball in college.
- Diana What kind sport? Marketing and advertising.
- Sidney Next, I have a big question for you. When you hear the word "agriculture" what comes to your mind? When you hear the word "agriculture" what comes to mind?
- Student Well . . .
- Sidney Tell me.
- Student Agriculture? Ok. Blacks. Back in my generation. I read a group of some books about Malcom X and . . . That's about all that I think.
- Sidney What do you think about Blacks? What do you mean about Black people in agriculture? What are you referring to? Black what? Do you know alot of Black farmers?
- Student No.
- Sidney So what do you mean by Blacks in agriculture? Do you know alot of Black people that work in agriculture?
- Student No, not really. I hear about people. But I really don't know any.
- Sidney Ok. Ishmael?
- Student Well first . . .
- Student I think about the cornfield out by Willie.
- Diana Ok. Brad?

- Student I think about corn. That's the first thing that comes to mind. Because you're always hearing about it.
- Diana All over the place.
- Sidney What do you think Richard?
- Student Black leaders.
- Sidney What do you mean about Black leaders when you say "agriculture?"
- Student I don't know--that's just what . . .
- Diana I mean--you don't know. Mario?
- Student Agriculture, well the first thing I think of like . . . said is farming and stuff like that. But then also, having thought about like being an engineer, I remember looking up on things like, chemical agriculture--when people are working with like pesticides and fertilizers and stuff like that. I think of that also.
- Diana Nick. What do you think about ag? What pops in your head?
- Student Farming.
- Sidney How about you . . . Do you think people have a bad image of people in agriculture?
- Diana What is your image of people in agriculture? Mario?
- Student I think some people have like a bad image because as we hear--the first thing we think of is farming, but you don't see the technical parts behind it. You don't see the things like that make it run. A lot of people when they think of agriculture--all they think of is farming, being on the farm and all the animals and smelling all . . . I guess that--it turns people off.
- Diana Tell me about the animals.
- Student Well, I mean some people--it's like--I remember I've had conversations--I can't remember who with about this particular--about something like this. Where we talk about farms and things and a lot of people just--the smells of the country--being on farms--it just--put yourself with animals.
- Diana ?

- Student I was of in my own land thinking about what he said. What was the question?
- Sidney Do you have a bad image of people in agriculture?
- Diana What is your image--how do you think people feel?
- Student Basically, I'm in Iowa yeah? You know--it's not so much . . . I think it's like --. . . everyone in the country, like you think of Iowa, you think of farming, you think of dumb farmers and you think of them doing the only thing they can do and stuff like that. I mean, when I went to New Jersey that was the opinion of everybody out there. A Black man from Iowa? You know they're thinking there's nothing here, but you know.
- Diana How come you said "dumb farmer?"
- Student That's the people--that's their opinion of, you know, like they didn't go to college to learn how to farm, you know they're born on it, or something.
- Diana Do you think there's a problem with that?
- Student Yeah.
- Diana Why?
- Student Because you got to respect what the people do. They put food on your plate every night . . . Uh, and they got to know something about what they're doing, because the crop just don't grow, without them taking care of it and stuff.
- Diana ?
- Student I really don't . . .
- Diana You don't have no idea how the people feel about farming? You have no idea how people feel about agriculture? How do you feel about agriculture?
- Student . . . I really don't think about it.
- Diana You really don't think about it. Ok. Craig.
- Student Um. Agriculture--when you think about agriculture, you do think of farmers and pigs and everything, and I mean--you think of

Green Acres. That's what I think of. You think of dumb, goofy people, walking around on a farm with pigs, living with pigs and living with pigs and cows and horse manure and things.

Diana Makes you think of Green Acres?

Student

Diana Nick.

Student I haven't really thought about it, but . . .

Diana I haven't really thought about it. You see pig people all over the United States and foreign countries.

Student Most people don't like em. They be wearing boots and hats . . .

Diana Oh . . . all about the dress. Right?

Student Cowboy boots. . .

Diana Because they wear overalls and cowboy boots and straw hats?

Student . . . Wear overalls, but they be wearing them bell-bottom overalls.

Diana All about dress? The way they dress?

Student I don't think about it.

Diana You don't think about it.

Student No.

Diana Do you ever think about that hamburger you had last night for dinner? Think about where it came from? . . . Clyde, what do you think?

Student Work. Detasseling and picking corn and . . .

Sidney What do you, uh, hear about people picking what?

Student Picking corn, pulling corn out by the stocks and ...

Diana Don't they have machines to do that?

Student Yeah, but you got to pick up after that--you got to pick up the stuff that the machines misses. You got to pick up.

- Diana Do you know for sure?
- Student No, but you know corn detasseling and that kind
- Sidney Ok.
- Diana ?
- Student Stupid. Machines pick it all up. . . .picking collard greens and . . . picking peas, you got to spray the garden so all the bugs . . . don't eat the crop.
- Diana You said that's work.
- Student Yeah.
- Diana You said you know something about you know, after the, . . . they pick the corn, tell us about that.
- Student I detasseled corn for, well, I was supposed to detassel corn for 3 weeks.
- Diana You're supposed to do what?
- Student For 3 weeks (two summers ago) 9th grade. Detassel corn and everything. You got to pull the tassels out. So you go by on this machine or you just walk. Hot! Real hot and I was supposed to do it for 3 weeks and I ended up doing it for 10 days and I fainted one day. I didn't go back. That's alot of work and that's just pulling the tassels out.
- Diana Weren't you getting paid?
- Student Yeah, I was getting paid, but I didn't feel alright.
- Diana Doesn't feel alright? How come it doesn't feel right?
- Student It just wasn't something I wanted to do--I'd rather go work in air conditioning and make the same amount of money.
- Diana Ok . . . more comfort.
- Sidney The next question. Does anyone in your family, community, church, or your friends work in agriculture, USDA, Soil Conservation Service, might work detasseling corn or 4H, they

might work in a flower shop. They might drive a truck--you know--to haul livestock? Know anybody?

Student My uncle from North Carolina, he owns a church?

Diana Owns a what?

Student Church.

Diana Church. Ok.

Sidney Does anybody in your family, friends, or anybody you know, work in agriculture? Does you uncle have a garden in the back of his church or anything?

Diana Do they grow these flowers or do they ???

Student ?

Diana They grow them?

Student My next door neighbor. She's a elderly lady and her whole front of her yard is covered with flowers and stuff. That's another thing that turned me off from agriculture because of all the bees and everything. I hate bees. I cannot stand bees. And they're always buzzing around the house summertime and everything. That kind of turns you off. Turns me off anyway.

Diana A greenhouse, anything like that?

Student Well, she has something like a greenhouse, kind of a ratty one. It's made out of plastic.

Diana Serves a purpose, right? Ok.

Sidney Anybody else? Tell me now, what have these people that you know, what have they said about the opportunities in agriculture? Are they satisfied like your uncle in Kreb's?

Diana Does he get like his job?

Sidney Does he get paid well?

Student Yeah. Yeah, he gets paid, so he likes it, you know. I mean he's got people working for him, you know, it's getting to be a business. First he'll start off like. . . Ok, we'll start this and do this. This got to be a big business for him now. So, you know, I can understand he

wants to be in it. You know, he wants to make it grow, you know--branch out.

Diana Does he say, Julian, when you graduate, will you come on and work for me" or "I'd love to have you on my team?"

Student Yeah, he'd say that. I'd be like, "I don't know." You know, I just . . . I don't know . . . I got different things on my mind. It wouldn't mind working for him, you know, it's not that I wouldn't do this or that if he acted like he called me one time and he's short-handed, you know, I'll help him, but I would rather go . . . ask him to do for the rest of my life, you know.

Sidney How about you, Brad? Do you think that your neighbor loves to work with flowers or . . .

Diana Same thing about you love flowers or . . .

Sidney Do you like dealing with the flowers or anything?

Student No. I know she likes it because she does it all the time. So she must like it. She really doesn't hype it up or say too much about it.

Sidney How about you, Mario?

Student I'm not too sure about these particular people, but I watch from what I see, people, they like what they're doing. They love what they're doing. That's why they're doing it, because I mean it's alot of work to, but you know, if that's what they want to do, they really don't mind it. They just like to enjoy seeing those pretty flowers come up and actually doing something with them. That's their satisfaction.

Diana How about the farmers? Do you think they'd like to . . .

Student Yeah, I think they like to farm. I mean, otherwise, you know, they wouldn't be doing it unless they had no choice.

Diana Nick? What about you? Nick. No one has ever said anything about you and opportunities in agriculture? How long you been in Iowa?

Student Six years.

Diana No one ever say anything to you about agriculture? No one with a job in agriculture has spoken to you about anything? Where were you before you came here?

- Student Illinois. . . .
- Sidney Next? Some teachers talk about different career opportunities. Have your teachers or counselors mentioned agriculture as a career?
- Diana Who said "no" first? Mario? They haven't said to you?
- Student No--they haven't, really. The things that I distinctly remember teachers mentioning is like engineering and mainly engineering. Seems like they want to just get to straight to the big stuff. They don't mention people who may want to do something a little less big I guess. They mention . . .
- Sidney What do you mean by less big? Do you mean, by pay? Or do you mean by? . . .
- Student No, not by pay. I mean by something that's um . . . I don't know. I guess, like serious educational-wise. Engineering and like being a lawyer, being a doctor, being an engineer—that's all they mention.
- Diana Do they mention teachers?
- Student Sometimes.
- Student Yeah, they mention teachers alot because they're teachers. I guess, I don't know. But they don't mention like, um . . . agriculture.
- Sidney So when all the clothes that you have on, all the food that you eat, all the water that you drink, you don't think that's serious? When you say serious?
- Diana You said serious.
- Student Oh . . . well I think it's a serious job because . . . but I don't know--he hasn't been--we haven't heard that much that it's something you have to have a lot of training or a lot of schooling or something going. They're always saying "get alot of math--get alot of . . . get . . . they don't say anything like learn how to work hard, learn to get up really, really early in the morning so that you could go into agriculture.
- Diana So . . . keeping agriculture cause they get up early and work hard?
- Student No, but you know, they just don't really stress anything that. . .
- Diana Clyde.

- Student Yeah, repeat the question.
- Sidney Ok, some teachers talk about different career opportunities. Have your teachers or counselors mentioned agriculture as a career?
- Student No. I was talking to the . . . counselor.
- Diana Would you repeat that question?
- Student I was talking to my teacher. I talk to him when I'm in the class, but out of class, I don't talk to him.
- Sidney How about your counselor?
- Student I never go to her either.
- Diana Why?
- Student I have nothing to say to her.
- Diana Why?
- Student If I have something to say, I say it to my mom. But my counselor, she calls me to her office . . .
- Diana . . . You don't feel comfortable talking to her?
- Student No.
- Diana Why not?
- Student I don't like talking to counselors.
- Diana Why not?
- Student I don't know.
- Diana There must be a reason.
- Sidney Why don't you all like talking to your counselor?
- Student Because. I don't know.
- Diana Does she or he make you feel uncomfortable about something?

- Student Yeah, cause they look you dead in your face. . . .and you talk to your mom . . . and you feel comfortable?
- Student Yeah.
- Diana Because she or he said that . . .
- Student Yeah.
- Diana Yeah.
- Sidney Now, Julian, I know that somebody said that you ought to go work for your uncle. You can make him alot of money. Ain't nobody gone to . . . No counselor, football coach, nobody?
- Student They said my counselors, um . . . I been here for 3 years and have not heard, maybe like business, engineering, law, medicine, all that. They'll say that and they'll say oh, um. Go play, you know football-- you know you going here and play football, you go in here to baseball, you go in and do this and that, but they've never said anything about agriculture.
- Diana How they pushing sports on you? Why do you suppose they are pushing sports on you?
- Student I'm not played them for awhile, I guess you know, I got talent, you know, but I don't know. They just . . .
- Diana Just a scenario--something to think about. What if you go to Texas Southern to play baseball? Full scholarship, x amount of dollars, so many dollars from the school each year. What if you break your leg your freshman year? Scholarship poor, boom. What are you going to do?
- Student Personally, I would have something to fall back on because I wouldn't like, college athletes now don't go out the sophomore year-- go to NBA for the money. I mean, my family is not rich, but I don't need the money right now. I'm not looking for that big money right now, I'm looking for, first of all, get that diploma you know, get that diploma in my hands, then I want to get my degree in my hand, and then I can start thinking about other things that's going on and stuff like that. Because, if you play sports, that only lasts so long.
- Sidney Ok. Our next question. Have any of you asked your teachers or counselors about opportunities in agriculture?
- Diana Why not, you don't think they know?

- Student ??
- Student They kind of push the leisurely jobs--the jobs that . . .
- Diana What do you mean by leisurely jobs?
- Student Well, kind of like you said. Kinda like getting up early in the morning and stuff like working with plants and getting dirty, really. The push the air conditioned room with a pencil in your hand, sitting back in a chair that swivels around.
- Diana Tie?
- Student Yeah, shirt and tie. Like that. If I . . . awhile, I know they probably know about agriculture, but you don't ask about it.
- Diana Because they're pushing all those other career choices on you?
- Sidney We just talked about different careers and Julian told about floral committees where they work with flowers and Brad also told us about his neighbor. Can anybody considering a career in agriculture? At all? Tell me why, why not. Just give me a why not answer. Anybody can tell me why they aren't thinking about?
- Student I really need to know more about it, because it's not like engineering. They'll tell you everything about engineering, they'll tell you architecture . . .
- Diana So that was no.
- Student They'll tell you everything about everything else, but for one thing I leave everything open. If agriculture, if I'm interested in agriculture, if somebody tells me about and I'm interested in it, yeah, I'll go into it. But nobody told me anything about it, so I really don't know.
- Diana . . . you're not really going to think about it if you don't know anything about it?
- Student I think it's kind of weird because. . . go back to the counselors for a second. I think it's kind of weird because we got one of the biggest chiropractic colleges in the nation sitting right across the street, we got you know, probably the biggest agriculture college in the state, I mean in the country sitting right in our state, but . . .
- Diana Nobody says anything about it.

- Student No--nobody says nothing about it.
- Diana Find that somewhat strange? I mean, you see . . . all these cornfields, I thought . . .
- Student I don't know why they don't stress it. I mean, you know, going back to Palmer, right across the street. You know, people come from all around the country to go to Palmer just to study, you know . . .
- Diana That's right. Alright, the next question.
- Sidney What is it about agriculture that would make you want to work in the area? Anything in agriculture? Might make you want to work in the area, I know I have . . . about different things. What do you think you concerned about? We told you about food, we talked about clothes. Is there anything in the food that concerns you? Or about clothing?
- Diana Or about something you might want to change.
- Sidney Yeah. Anything you might want to change about agriculture?
- Diana Saw you look like you were sitting there thinking a little bit. Thinking about something. Tell us what you're thinking about. Don't tell me you're tired either.
- Student Well, we don't like. . .
- Diana You don't like what they're doing?
- Student No, the chemicals and stuff.
- Diana You don't like the chemicals? What chemicals? What are you talking about?
- Student Pesticides and all that suff.
- Diana The pesticides? They make the plants grow big and get corn this big and they can ship em to Japan and that's more money for our country and more money for the economy.
- Sidney Why do you think it's bad?
- Student ?
- Diana It will get you in the long run.

- Sidney That's a good answer. What do you think Clyde?
- Student . . . You can put your own food on your own table, you can make your own clothes, you don't have to buy stuff--you can keep your money in your pocket to pay bills and put money in the bank.
- Diana Put food on your own table? Let me tell you, "I'm from . . . I never seen food prices so high in my life. I mean, you have a supermarket here--corn is like what? I went to the supermarket Sunday. 49 cents an ear! . . . I don't get it.
- Student Why you making your own. . . products, your own food stuff, you can start shipping it to stores and stuff and . . .
- Diana Open up your own business. Anybody else?
- Student We're asking if we're interested in too?
- Diana Agriculture. Why would you want to go into agriculture?
- Student I like the design part of it, but I had not known that that was agriculture. I like the, I don't know, what do you call the landscaping design, or
- Sidney Landscaping.
- Student I like that part. I would go into that, because I like to draw, landscaping.
- Diana You all said you were going to architecture, as in buildings, but I don't know, I guess that would lead into it, but like arranging, I guess a yard, or the area around the building.
- Sidney That'd be landscaping.
- Diana Anybody else?
- Student You brought up a point about agriculture I think it had to do with clothes and everything too. I don't think a lot of people know that. You know, that lots of things that happens in a farm, whatever has to do with what we got on our backs. You know, I knew it, but when you put your clothes on, why you don't think about it. You just think about cross colors. . .
- Diana Making money, or . . .

- Student You know, they cost \$45 at the store and something like that.
- Diana . . . That is, I mean you wonder why is that? Somebody's getting the money somewhere.
- Student It only costs . . . dollars to make.
- Diana You got that right.
- Sidney That will lead us to our next question. What can we do to get young people like yourself to think about agriculture as a career? What do you think would be something to do?
- Diana Ok. Brad. Did you have another comment on that last question?
- Student Which one was it?
- Sidney What is it about agriculture that would make you want to work in the area?
- Student Probably like you know the chemicals have a long-term effect.
- Sidney What is it about agriculture that would make you want to work in the area?
- Student You have to talk to them. That's what I think. If he would have known.
- Diana To make them more aware, basically.
- Student Yeah--tell 'em what it is. Tell 'em what all it is. Ok--I just thought agriculture was just farming--I thought it was farming and stuff like that, I didn't know it had to do with clothes and I know that people's socks are cotton, but I thought jeans come from jean material.
- Sidney Good answer.
- Diana Alot of people didn't know. Thought denim just came from somewhere. Ok. I can understand that. So just make them more aware.
- Student People just need to talk more about it. Influence the young--the youth to go into engineering, go into medicine or something--they need to talk about agriculture too.
- Diana Do you all have an agriculture ed teacher here at Davenport?

- Student I doubt it.
- Student I doubt it seriously.
- Sidney What do you think Mario?
- Student I do think that we need to know--we need to know what ag spans over because I realize it more now that agriculture--like Clyde said that it covers alot of things--alot of things that you normally don't think. You can like alot of different subjects in school, and still be able to use that--what you learn in school in agriculture--like drawing. I didn't know that particular design was in there. I think we need to know what all agriculture spans.
- Diana Like a big umbrella, you couldn't even possibly imagine all the fields in agriculture.
- Student I think the biggest thing is: you mustn't--you got to inform the people that we listen to everyday--like counselors and like Mrs. Hestler um . . . everybody so like when we come into the office and we're talking about majors in college and when they call us in, that's on the list. They talk about it, they understand what they're talking about. I think they don't know what they're talking about. Even if brought it up, they don't know.
- Diana Inform the people that do this and to . . .
- Sidney Does anyone have any final thoughts about agriculture? Since we started, you didn't know much about it, now you know alot. Anybody got any final thoughts?
- Diana Or you think of something, that you may consider going into?
- Student Now I do.
- Diana What?
- Student Because it interests me alot. Making clothes and putting food on my own table. You go out in the year 2000 or something. Fuel is going to be higher than what it is now. It's going to cost more money, while you're making your own . . . your're going to worry about the . . . paying \$3.00 for such and such and it's . . .for one thing and it wasn't then. Before it wasn't much, but it was 90 some cents.
- Diana Anybody else? Any final thoughts?

Student I'd have to go up there and see what's going on because you know, you just can't look at something and say that looks interesting and go up there and you might not like it. You know. . .I'm going to feel comfortable doing.

Sidney You got something too?

Student I'll think about agriculture.

Diana Something to . . . think about it. You are a sophomore?

Student No. . . ?

Diana Well, you have time to think about it. I mean, and you can go drop past your counselor's office.

Group 1/females/Davenport Central

- Sidney College of Agriculture at Iowa State University. Assisting me is Diana Mitchell. Also from Iowa State University. We are trying to gain information about Black students' perceptions toward agriculture as a career of choice. There are no right or wrong answers, but differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view, even if it differs from what others think. Before we begin, let me remind you of some ground rules. This is strictly a research project. There are no rules. Please speak up. Only one person should talk at a time. We are recording this session. We don't want to miss any of your comments. We will be on a first name basis only. On our later reports, there will not be any names attached to comments. Our session will last about an hour and there will not be any formal breaks, so let's begin with our first student. I can remember back when I was in high school--there was some courses I just dreaded going to, like math, science and agriculture class. So, my question, my first question is, what are some of the subjects you enjoy the most in high school? We can start with anybody.
- Student Math and calculus right now. I enjoy math. Let's see. English classes. I'm in the advanced placement class and I just happen to be one of the only two minorities in the class. And also, my calculus class. There's only two minorities . . . minorities in the higher advanced classes of seniors.
- Sidney Could you tell us why you like English and math?
- Student Math. It comes very easy for me and I like working with numbers and English, I like writing--that's how I express myself--writing poetry and things. And there is also a class they offer, it's uh, it's an elective class--you don't have to take it, but is . . . of the brightest seniors--it's called Humanities and it's a college-based class, basically and it's like a lecturing class. There's 60 of us in there and we listen to lectures every day, take notes, write reflections and our opinions on the lessons and we have forums based on the Every Friday, we have forums and we can get up and speak freely about anything we like to.
- Sidney What courses do you like?
- Student Um, basically English and Science.
- Sidney What do you like about English and Science?

- Student Well, Science because I want to be a marine biologist when I grow up and English is just, you know, one of the classes I enjoy.
- Sidney That's good. Anybody else?
- Student My favorite classes are Math and English. Math, because it comes easy for me and English I just like to write and express my opinion.
- Student I like Algebra. It's easy to me and . . . it comes natural. And I like student council. It's fun and you get to do alot of activities and stuff. Biology, that's fun too. You do alot of experiments and stuff.
- Sidney My next question is: Which courses do you like least and tell me why.
- Student History.
- Sidney History, what's the problem?
- Student I can't, for some reason, I don't know if it's that I don't want to remember it so much, but where like math, you know if I have a test, I can memorize things easily, but history, I . . . boring to me. It shouldn't be. I should be excited learning about our history and where we came from, except but the thing is, we don't learn too much about Black history and that's what I'm interested in most. I mean I am interested in whites and where they came from, but that's all we hear. We don't hear, we don't hear, you know I did take a class in American Minority Cultures which we did learn about Blacks, but we only spent about 3 weeks. The majority of it was on Native American Indians and I mean there wasn't very much on Blacks, so again we don't know too much about Black history.
- Sidney Which courses do you like least? Tell me why.
- Student . . . learning so many numbers--I don't like that.
- Sidney
- Student The class I like least is Physics. I like science, but I don't like . . . I kinda like science, but I take it because it's challenging, but that course, it's not really hard, but it kinda is.
- Sidney Ok.
- Student American Studies and math.

- Sidney Tell me why.
- Student Because American Studies is boring and then math because it's just hard for me.
- Sidney Ok.
- Student Chemistry. It's hard to comprehend . . . I just don't understand it, so I hate it . . . I hate going.
- Student Physics was fun because, well for some reason I work with numbers, that's why physics is easier than chemistry is, . . . in puring all those compounds and I . . .
- Sidney Any courses you don't like?
- Student Basically, just math. I'm not too good at it. It's a hard subject, but I . . .
- Student I like all of them.
- Sidney You like all of them? That's good. I guess my next question is uh, what are your plans after you finish school? Are you going to work? Or are you going to college? or junior college? Are you going to get married and have a baby? What were you going to do?
- Student I plan to get married and have a kid like in the 2nd year of marriage and then be a business woman or be a teacher and go to UNI or . . .
- Sidney Wait a minute. Are you going to get married first? or go to school first?
- Student Well, I'm probably going to go to school first, then get married and then try to be a teacher or business woman and
- Student I'm a senior and I've applied to like I've already told Diana, I applied to Duke, St. Ambrose, UNI and Mt. Mercy in Cedar Rapids, so I plan to go to college--a 4-year university possibly and the reason I was thinking about St. Ambrose is because they offer your MBA in business or I'm planning on going into business. I'm not likely sure what may be accounting. I like working in numbers. I am, right now, talking with my boyfriend--we're talking about getting engaged and then after our 2nd year of college. I'm not going to plan . . . I'm not getting married until after college. I don't have any kind of commitment like that until after college.

- Sidney What are your plans?
- Student I'll go to college first.
- Student I was going to go to college and be a teacher and minor in business.
- Student I want to go to college and be a teacher . . .
- Student I'm going to go to a college or university and probably get my 4-year degree in teaching and then maybe settle down and get married.
- Student Me? I'm thinking I might go to the Navy when I get out of school and then to study like Earth Science and stuff like that or underground water and stuff like that.
- Sidney That sounds real good.
- Diana Before we go on, you all mentioned college. Are they 4-year or 2-year colleges or technical colleges?
- Student Mine's a 4-year.
- Student 4 years and then grad school possibly.
- Sidney Alright, my next question : When you hear the word "agriculture" what exactly what comes into your mind. I know when I was in high school I thought "Man, I ain't working on no farm." So tell me, what's the . . . give me some adjectives that come to mind. I mean, just tell me what you think about.
- Student Basically, white . . .
- Sidney What do you mean, like the world? What do you mean?
- Student Like white people.
- Sidney What else?
- Student And just farmers like she said.
- Student I don't think of black people when I think of farming. I think of white people.
- Diana Why is that?
- Student I don't . . . because in Iowa, I don't know that there is any . . . but even when you see commercials, or you see like a pesticide

commercials, all you see is the white people. On farms, with tractors and stuff--that's all you see. So I'm not saying that there's not Blacks and I'm not . . . but they portray on TV is just the white farmer. That's how I perceive agriculture.

Diana Anybody else?

Student I think of corn.

Diana Corn?

Sidney that's a real good answer.

Diana Why do you say "corn"?

Student Because I live in . . . When you're driving along the highways you'll see cornfields for miles. A lot of the highways.

Student when you mention to someone that you're from Iowa, that's the first thing they think of.

Student Yes . . . do you live on a farm? Do you pick corn? They ask me all kinds of questions.

Sidney Ok. What do you think? What do you think about when you hear agriculture, I know something that pops into your mind?

Student I mostly think . . . because my mind is farms

Sidney What else do you think of? I mean, you know--what else do you think about?

Student I guess, I don't think about it.

Sidney We covered farming, we covered Black people, we covered the world, we covered white people, commercials, we covered cornfields, anything we're missing?

Student Pesticides and stuff.

Student yeah.

Sidney Alright, our next question would be, do you think people have a bad image of people in agriculture?

Student Yes.

- Diana Why?
- Sidney Why do you say that?
- Student Because I think alot of white people do. Because they don't know nothing--they really don't know nothing about it.
- Diana Ok, you all said "they don't know anything about it," but you said white people you think of more of the farms.
- Student That's what I mean. I don't think people see a bad image of them. I think . . . uh sometimes I think people might respect the farmer in some aspects, or respect people in agriculture because they are what produces you know, some of our food, they grow, so I don't think that of them, I just see alot of whites and I think you know, Blacks should be involved with it, but I don't see anything in being a bad image. I respect them actually. You know. They get out there and work all day, hard work, that's hard work. And they probably work harder than somebody who works 40 hours a week, because they're out in the field all day--planting and sowing and stuff.
- Sidney Do you think that's bad?
- Student Yeah, because in the long run, it kind of messes with the plants, system. . .
- Sidney Do you think that's gonna have an effect on your food maybe.
- Student Yes. I know, it causes people to die faster.
- Sidney OK
- Student Some of it produces like em, new generations of bad plants and things like that. In the long run, it ruins the soil fast.
- Sidney OK
- Student Sometimes they come up pesticides run off into our water
- Diana That's not good.
- Student Get into the ground.
- Sidney You've got some good comments. You all know that? My next question would be: Does anyone in your family, your community, your church, your friends, work in agriculture? I'm going to give you some examples before you answer. Have people work with 4H

Youth, some people drive trucks that haul livestock and grain, you have people work for the soil conservation service. They have people that go out and design like the front area out here--landscaping and design. People that work in law as affirmative action officers for like John Deere Tractor. You have people that work in engineering, so do you know anybody that might work in these areas?

Student No one on my dad's side, but my mom's side is white and I have quite a few.

Student What do they do? Let's see. My uncle on my mom's side, her brother, he works for John Deere in Arizona. I don't know that there is, but he does do work, he was transferred there. He works for John Deere. Um . . . let's see.

Diana Is there a farmer, or . . . sell chemicals, or.

Student He's a . . . I forgot what it is. There's a certain title for it and he sells the machinery and stuff.

Sidney You don't have any friends, you don't know anybody. You don't know anybody that works in a flower shop or 4H leader or . . . all agriculture.

Student Friends. My friend's dad.

Diana Anybody else?

Student My dad used to work at John Deere. My brother, he works at Wilson's meat cutting plant.

Sidney Ok

Student My other brother used to work at IBP.

Diana What is IBP?

Student Meat cutting plant. He was telling us about it.

Student It probably smells bad.

Student He worked there 3 days and then he tried it again and only worked 2. Because he was um, the one that killed the animal, cleaned it and cut it up. He said that he couldn't stand it, because it smelled bad and um . . . one day he was cutting up a cow and there was a female and inside there was a calf still alive and he had to kill and so after that he just quit.

- Student One thing that I saw on TV that bothered me. I saw this about 1/2 year ago, but it was on 20/20. They had a special on the USDA. They were showing films of like plants where the animals go through and they cut through the bladder and urine splattered out all over the meat and they still run it through the assembly line so to speak and they found lead pellets and little lead pellets in some of the meat. There was a kid they had on there who was paralyzed or died from it. One of the two, but I don't think . . . there's a big problem with the meat and how it's processed. I mean, I think there's too . .
- Diana Anybody else?
- Sidney Anybody else have a brother work at IBP or . . . Nobody know a 4-H leader . . .
- Student My mom's friend, she works at John Deere.
- Sidney Nobody. My next question would be: What have they said to you--all the people that we've mentioned earlier--about that worked at John Deere or whatever agriculture company. What have they said about the opportunities in agriculture? Do they say it's a lot of jobs, are they satisfied with their job or . . .
- Student I don't know about John Deere they're always laying off. It seems ...
- Student No, they don't shut down . . .
- Sidney Would you tell us again about your brother. You said he quit because of . . .
- Student Yeah . . . um, well he said that he worked long hours and he got two 15-minute breaks--1 in the morning and 1 in the afternoon and the other time he was sitting there in the room, just cutting meat--one after the other. He said it was gross. He came home from those 3 days with alot of stories and he didn't eat. He just told us all kinds of stories and after that he didn't eat meat for a long time.
- Diana Seems as if they are horror stories.
- Student They are.
- Sidney Come on, we want to know them.
- Denise What are these stories your brother told you--I want to know.

- Student Well, he was telling us that um, ok. That there was somebody next to him and they don't have any shields on their face, people wear glasses, you know, and that's the only thing he had for protection. Somebody next to him was cutting up the animals and had to cut off the bladder and it kind of like tore open and squired all over his face. He just wiped it off and kept working and he was telling us too that they brought in a cow to slaughter and there was a calf and he was dead. They cut open the stomach and the calf was alive and it got up and started running around. Somebody had to kill it, clean it and everything. I don't think I'd want to work there.
- Diana That was John Deere?
- Sidney IBP. Anybody else? I heard everybody say, alot of bad things about agriculture. Somebody tell me something--I heard everybody say . . . so give me some. Give me one you heard.
- Student I don't know.
- Sidney I know I heard you say something. Give me one you heard. Come on. It's just you and I talking to me.
- Student I think most of the people that work at John Deere like their job, for the most part. I think there's probably quite a few opening jobs--maybe in different states, other than Iowa.
- Diana Why do they like their jobs? Money?
- Student Always the money. They do get paid good money and have very good benefits.
- Student I know that they have good pensions. Very good. They get insurance coverage from John Deere. That's a very good place to work.
- Sidney Anything you've heard? I know I heard you say "Oh, yeah . . . bad stuff.' You haven't heard anything. My next question: Some teachers talk about different career opportunities. Have your teachers or counselors mentioned agriculture careers?
- Student No. They might talk about careers in the science field but . . .
- Diana This is Iowa and no one has . . .
- Student? They talk about science, but nothing.

- Student Our counselor doesn't even say nothing to us about . . . it's just like you know.
- Sidney I can't believe that. This is Iowa and nobody is coming around and saying anything? What do they mention besides science?
- Student Teaching.
- Student Alot of UNI is . . .
- Student They want teachers.
- Student There's alot of fields that they're trying to get like minorities into, so teaching is one . . .
- Diana The counselors really talk about teaching.
- Sidney What else?
- Student That's it. Law or business is talked about.
- Sidney Nobody ever mentions agriculture? At all? Just . . .
- Student No. Uh uh.
- Sidney Nobody every say, "Well why don't you go work 4H Youth and . . . Ok. My next question will be:
- Diana You all laugh. when he's saying that. Why'd you laugh?
- Sidney Come on, tell us.
- Student I just that's just what something you think of a teacher saying. I mean I don't know why . . .
- Student I don't picture my counselor saying something like "Go work in agriculture" not that it's so odd, but . . .
- Student I mean that's something you'd probably be surprised if you did hear them say.
- Student Anybody. . . . Cause it's not everybody that would want to do that.
- Sidney Alright, my next question would be: Have you asked your teachers or counselors about opportunities in agriculture?
- Student No!!

- Diana . . . have talked to you all about?
- Student All I hear about are those subjects and that's what I ask them about.
- Diana What subjects?
- Student The business, teaching and stuff.
- Diana So you . . . no one has asked any of your teachers or counselors about agriculture?
- Student No.
- Sidney Are you considering a career in agriculture? Why or why not. Tell me why not.
- Student I don't think I want to work with stuff like that.
- Diana What do you mean, "stuff like that?" What do you mean by that?
- Sidney You don't understand it?
- Diana Anybody else?
- Student Yeah, the only thing that I really think of maybe going into agriculture-wise is Botany. Working with plants maybe . . . that form of agriculture. That's something that interests me. I don't want to work with animals or slaughtering, or raising but I wouldn't mind working with plants.
- Diana I saw a hand up over here. Go ahead.
- Student Well, I don't think I would because it's never been emphasized--nobody ever talks about it, so I really don't know anything about it, so therefore, it doesn't make you curious or anything. Should go and ask questions or to go pursue--that type of career.
- Sidney You know you talked to me this morning--I need your help.
- Student Ok. The reason I wouldn't want to be one is because I really just don't see myself as being one.
- Student Another thing people may not be attracted to is the farm. I mean, it's not like a life-long career that is very promising, I mean, because you have the years where you have . . . their crops are bad

so there's years where . . . and you know, that's your family and the income that you have. So farmwise, if you need to be a farmer that's not--It doesn't seem to me to be very promising, because the years. You have to basically depend on the weather for how good or bad your crops do.

Diana Not promising? You have to eat.

Student I know, but . . .

Diana We have to have food. Iowa sends food all over the United States, foreign countries also. . . . Not promising? Tell me a little more about that.

Student We do need food and we need to eat. So, I mean, we do need farming, but it's just a lot of hard work and from year to year. I mean, if you have too much rain, I mean not enough rain and you go through drought, and you go through bad seasons, so not that it's not promising, I guess, but it's a lot of hard work and you might not get a lot of benefits from it because you have to depend on the weather from year to year and you might not have good years.

Diana . . .

Student I wouldn't want to go into it. I just don't see myself. . . being a farmer because when I picture myself being a farmer I just think of pulling along a plow or . . . or picking cotton or something like that.

Diana Picking cotton? Why do you use that example?

Student Because.

Sidney Tell the truth. Why you say picking cotton.

Student Well, because you said what do you think about agriculture? I had mentioned that to my mom at one time and she had told me about when she was little, they had to pick cotton and stuff like that in the fields and all they picked all day and for \$1.50 for the whole day.

Student And I think that's why some, maybe Black people aren't--they don't feel as interested in it because their--you know, they think back to when their parents had to pick cotton--they don't even want to think about picking--that's all they think of agriculture as--as picking cotton and they don't want to do it.

Sidney Do you think that's bad or good?

- Student I think it's bad.
- Student It is probably . . . That kind of is. I think that alot of people think that because I think when you think about agriculture, that's all you think of, you know, you think of stuff in fields and then the animals . . .
- Student There's much more to it than that.
- Student Yeah, and that's what you don't know about, but the stuff that there's not emphasize this school or any place unless you know, somebody bothers to tell you about it.
- Student That's what you get from commercials. The teacher even mentioned that all you get is basically the farm image when there actually is more to agriculture--it's a broad field, but all you picture . . . as you picture yourself being in it is a picture of farms and just working on the farm all day--you don't think of all the other aspects of agriculture--which I don't know what they are so . . .
- Diana Meet the media . . . see it on television.
- Student On television alot of the times, all you see is commercials for pesticides. You see the farmer on his farm talking about a certain pesticide or you see things that make corn grow . . . I mean that's all you see, basically. There's very few times I see commercials for 4H or anything like that. Local commercials around here. Every once in awhile I will see a 4H commercial.
- Student I don't think--you know--you already said that like on a commercial . . . like agriculture and stuff, as far as farming goes. I know when my grandfather was alive, he always had at least 4 or 5 acres of nothing but plants and everything and every year he would just . . . I hated it . . . it was too hard--it was hot. And there would be 15 of us out there. I mean I was going through it . . .
- Student I've just never been
- Diana Why do you suppose your grandfather made you help?
- Student Probably because there was so much and there were so many of us. He really didn't want to do it himself. Never helped us . . . Probably just so that we'd know how to do it and give us a little bit of responsibility.
- Student We still have time. They ring early . . .

- Diana Do you want to learn more about agriculture?
- Student Probably.
- Diana Why do you suppose he wanted you to learn more about agriculture?
- Student So that . . .
- Sidney Our next question is: What is it about agriculture that would make you want to work in the area? I know you should think about things like. What is it about agriculture that would make you want to work in the area. Now we've been talking about agriculture all morning. Now you all said some good things.
- Student Probably plants, maybe, but that's about it.
- Diana Probably plants. What do you mean by plants?
- Student Like basically, just working with them I mean besides the fact
. with animals and stuff like that, you're just killing them off you know.
- Diana Plants, you know, like in a greenhouse or . . . florist or something like that?
- Student Yeah.
- Student Yeah.
- Sidney You said something about something about botany? Tell me more about that. What would you want to work in the field? That would make you want to work with botany? Something special you mentioned botany. That kind of caught my ear.
- Student Uh. I like working with plants in general. Just regular plants that we use for also for food, but flowers and stuff. I want to go into florist.
- Sidney Anybody else? What is it about agriculture that would make me want to work in the area. I know you always hear about people being overweight. So I know you don't think this applies. You say..Um. I could be in dietetics.
- Diana When we were talking about the meat, did you all stop eating for awhile? I mean...

Sidney What it is about agriculture. You talk about that meat that made you stop eating it for a week? Anything about agriculture that you want to change?

Student I know something I would change the fact that they have to kill off the animals and stuff like that. Because...

Sidney You want to stop killing animals.

Student Yes.

Diana So you want to be a vegetarian?

Student But this . . . fitness. We all...those animals kill something else to eat it, so it's a big food chain. I don't agree with killing animals either, but I guess I eat as a natural.

Student And then there's no telling what the animals might have, you know.

Student That's the truth. I think in some places that they kill too many.

Student Yeah.

Student Well, like a long time ago when they extinct the buffalo.

Sidney What do you mean by not sure what the animals are . . .

Student What they have. They might have a disease or something.

Sidney So you think that might affect you if you eat it?

Student Yes.

Sidney Ok.

Diana What about the animals that are disease free and there are chemicals pumped into them to make. . .

Student I think that they should find some way to test them, to see what they have.

Student I think that's not right. Like when they put stuff in the grass and animals eat it so they'll be healthier and things like that because . . . Too much tampering with nature in the long run, somewhere down the line, it messes up the genetics and produces a bad offspring.

- Diana Ok. What about the almighty dollar? That's what it's all about. Making a dollar.
- Student For them, but that . . . it's not . . . to us, so I mean.
- Diana It is . . . back to us when you get all these diseases all this cancerous ...
- Student I know but the point is, I think the point is is that all these diseases and stuff that they're giving us, I mean, virtually we're killing them and they're killing us too.
- Sidney How about when you drink your water? Maybe when you watched the news and I see all the water quality on there. . . . I didn't hear that until I came to Iowa. I'm like, "what is it this about 13 points? I knew about it because I'm in agriculture . . . all they put on the news. Do you think that's important in Iowa?
- Student Yeah. If you're drinking the water.
- Sidney What do you think that water might do to you?
- Student Contaminate different things, because it's filtered from our rivers and people polluting so bad and throw anything in them. They don't care.
- Student Like the Mississippi. People don't care and they think that , they think that they want things to be safe and they don't want to drink something that is contaminated, but they they'll go down to the river and throw a cup or throw anything in there. They won't think about that.
- Student I saw a person on the news and they were all . . . and someone said that the water might spoil.
- Student It's a big thing they're pushing. Water purifiers, because they think our water is so bad and alot of people get water purifiers.
- Student It's terrible. You walk in there and it stinks terribly. The water looks gross. There's dead fish floating in the water and . . .
- Student Very poorly.
- Student I mean there is like . . . and other things in there and then
- Student That's what I'm saying. Everyone could do, really do their part if they didn't contaminate the water. I mean they don't, they want to

drink safe water, but again, yet look what I'm going to throw anything in the river just to get rid of it somewhere. Throw it in the trash can where it belongs.

Sidney Now when you see all these cornfields when you drive down the road, do you think that's bad or good?

Student Good.

Student The corn's there year after year and it's deteriorating the soil, so it's not going to . . . planting corn.

Diana Where else are they going to plant it? People have to eat.

Student I know, but I mean, but instead of just growing corn in that specific spot every year, they should change the plants, so that the soil doesn't deteriorate as fast.

Diana What kind of plants should they change it to? I don't know anything about this soil.

Sidney That's good.

Diana Can you grow cucumbers from the same soil?

Student No, not really. But you can grow like soybeans or something instead of corn.

Sidney What do you think Connie? What do you think something agriculture you'll want to . . . that would make you want to work in the area. Is there anything about agriculture make you want to work in that area? I mean, something you might want to change. We eat this food everyday, you drink the water and you work with kids, I mean you see kids everyday. Anything you might want to do...

Student Make teachers . . .

Sidney Where did you come from?

Student St. Louis.

Diana How long have you been here?

Student About 3 years, and a half.

- Diana . . . all these cornfields.
- Sidney What do you think of Michelle?
- Student I don't know, really because I don't know that much about agriculture.
- Sidney You know more than you think. You ate a hamburger yesterday, so . . . and you know that meat comes from animals science, right. Things come from the cow.
- Student . . . ?
- Student I think that they should have , they should come out with some of the machines so where they could like test them before they sell it.
- Diana We have that. USDA.
- Student It's not helping any.
- Diana But then again, they're out to make a dollar too.
- Student They're probably making more money than what the meat people do, you know.
- Sidney What do you think, uh, Cindra?
- Student Well, um, I like planting plants, you know, flowers and stuff, roses, and stuff like that. I'm not really into farming and stuff like that.
- Sidney Do you realize that only 10% of the people farm in the US now? Does anybody , so more than likely, you won't work on a farm? If you work in agriculture today? 10% of the people in the US, where as in the end of the civil war, 90% of the people worked on the farm. Now it's under 10%.
- Diana . . . we are depending on that 10% for food. Kinda sad, ain't it? What if these people say, "Hey, we want to go to law school."
- Sidney I guess our next question, we better move on. What do you suggest we do to get young people like yourself, to think about agriculture as a career? Do we need to improve the pay, do we need to improve your awareness of jobs in agriculture? I believe . . .
- Student We don't, you know, we hear so much about . . .

- Student We need to just get our teachers talking about that, because we need people in fields, so, fields that are demanding and we should have teachers . . . in the schools. Should become more aware. You don't hear about it, but I think if you hear about it, you might become more curious and want to find out.
- Sidney What do you think. . .
- Student I think that like the students who care about how the meat and stuff is processed, I think that they're going to wonder about well, why is the meat and stuff killing off people, you know. I mean, that's what's going to make them not want to be.
- Diana What about you Denise, what do you think?
- Student I don't know, I think alot of the awareness needs to put out and I think it would be good, like different people from various plants from Iowa came and talked to a whole group of students about agriculture and tell what their job is and not to just get the people that are working in the business, like alot of people at John Deere, like Mr. Jim Hester. He works at John Deere, but he's so high up there that he works more with the business than just other parts of agriculture.
- Diana So what if Mr. Hester . . . were to come in here and do a seminar with the student body. Think that would be interesting?
- Student Yeah. But not only get them, just get--hire people from different areas in agriculture--get maybe a farmer, get a person that works with the business, get someone that works with plants, just get all the different--because it's a wide field. People, again when you think agriculture, they just think of farms.
- Sidney What do you think, Kathy?
- Student That's what I think--I think they just think of the meat and the farms because they're not taught anything else.
- Sidney How about you. . .
- Student I think that our teachers at school need to talk more about it and then let you know, because the only subjects they talk about is law, and teaching and . . . and they need to get more agriculture.
- Diana Why do we need more people in agriculture?

- Student Cause there is very few people that even know anything about agriculture.
- Student We need agriculture to survive.
- Diana . . . promote it 10%.
- Student And not even eat, but just . . . JustIt can't be a dying field. It just can't be.
- Sidney ?
- Student Well, um, like what just about everybody is saying that you need in the...the teachers to talk about it and stuff and like what Denise was saying to have all different persons in agriculture and jobs and stuff, have them come in talk to us. Let us know more about it and stuff like that.
- Sidney What do you think, Connie?
- Student I think they should already know what's going on.
- Sidney Who should.
- Student The teachers. They should have been on some of the kids's farm . . .
- Diana They should know, since they are here in Iowa? Or...
- Student ?
- Diana I mean, I've been living here for a couple of months now, so I should know ...
- Student Not just yet, but . . . old, they should know. Older.
- Sidney That's a good answer.
- Diana I see what you're saying, I realize they should know and they should let you all know.
- Sidney Alright, our last question will be: Do you have any final thoughts about agriculture as a field in which to work? I know when we first started, nobody wanted to work in agriculture. Now, since we discussed all these different things, does anybody think that they might want to work in agriculture and then tell us why.

- Student Well, because when we first came, that's with a lot of students, if you just tell them about agriculture, they won't want to work in it, but with you sitting here discussing the different kinds of agriculture, in the different fields, you can see that it's open to a variety of things and you might want to work in that's not just farming. Discussing the different fields and the pay and there's only 10% people in agriculture. You know that there's a demanding . . . I'd consider about . . . but I know a little bit more about it.
- Sidney Centra?
- Student I really wouldn't want to work in agriculture, because, now there are . . . like being teacher and help with kids and stuff like that.
- Diana Do you want to teach agriculture?
- Sidney Now, we told you about 4H Youth Development. You could do that. You work with kids and you actually teach. You all have a 4H person who comes into school here? That's when they come in and take you out on a field trip.
- Diana Do you all know what 4-H is?
- Student I know what it is, but they don't come to our school.
- Student Like I said, there is every once in a while, there might be a local commercial about 4-H, but other than that, 4-H . . .
- Sidney I mean you could go into Home Economics, you could go into agriculture education. You could do all that teaching in high school. You can work with 4-H kids and set up programs that would make them aware and take them to plants, like she said take them to plants like John Deere and let them do seminars for the little kids so they'll know about careers in agriculture so you have a lot of wide opportunities in agriculture. You see? That you want to be a teacher, that's good. Anika? Do you have any final thoughts about agriculture as a field in which to work?
- Student No, I don't, because. . .
- Sidney Now when you came, you had a bad attitude so, now you got a better attitude about agriculture.
- Student No, I just don't see myself as being a farmer.
- Sidney You still don't see yourself working in agriculture?

- Student No. I guess it's because it's because I have my mind on, since I've been in 6th grade, on doing something else.
- Sidney And what is that?
- Student A marine biologist.
- Diana You think there ain't any way connected with agriculture?
- Student It's working with animals, so, but I like dolphins and stuff like that, so ...
- Sidney Have you ever heard of aquaculture?
- Student What?
- Sidney Have you ever heard of aquaculture?
- Student No.
- Sidney So when you talk about marine biology, that is aquaculture and that's working with agriculture. It's just in the ocean. That's the earth too.
- Student I know, but . . .
- Diana It's all connected.
- Sidney It's all connected. That's agriculture.
- Diana So if I had my big oil rig down in Texas, going to dump all this oil on your dolphin, how would you feel about that?
- Student I wouldn't be too grate...I mean, you know.
- Sidney So, in other words, you're interested in agriculture.
- Student Yeah.
- Sidney That's good. Alright, you didn't even know that. Let's go . . . how about you Denise?
- Student I think I'd be interested. Maybe because of talking about it and has got my curiosity up a little bit.
- Sidney Ok.

- Student I think I might like doing something like that.
- Sidney Connie
- Student I . . .
- Diana Ok. Michelle.
- Student I could see myself doing that now, now that we discussed it, talked about it.
- Sidney
- Student Um, yeah. I could see myself doing it. I like working with plants, you know, like in a flower shop or something like that. Have your own flower shop business .
- Diana You know, there's money in flowers. You all been to a wedding.
- Sidney Now I think,
- Diana Flowers all over the place.
- Sidney I think Anika said something about when she thinks of agriculture, she thinks of the world, you think of Black people, you think of . . . think you could give us some more examples of what you actually mean when you say "Black people". What do mean when you say when you think of Black people? Why do you think of Black people when you think of agriculture?
- Diana Hey, I don't know any Black farmers in Iowa.
- Student I mean, it can be black or white.
- Sidney Why do you think of the world then?
- Student Because there's people that are farmers and stuff like that.
- Sidney And somebody said, I think it was Cindy, You said you think of white people in commercials. What do you mean?
- Student Um...That's just all I see on commercials is the white farmers and pesticides and corn. You don't see any ... they don't ever show on TV a Black farmer and his family on a farm.
- Sidney I want to thank you all for cooperating with my discussion this morning. I learned alot and thank you again.